



# Diversity

## About this Topic: Diversity



### Topic Mentor

#### Martha R. A. Fields

Martha R. A. Fields has close to 25 years of experience in management, human resources, and diversity/globalization. She is President, Founder, and CEO of [Fields Associates, Inc.](#), a firm that provides consulting, coaching, and educational programs in the areas of human resources management; executive development; diversity and globalization; and work/life integration. Since 2000, she has chaired the Linkage Summit on Leading Diversity, the nation's premier diversity conference. Martha is the former president of the Boston Human Resources Association, and has received numerous awards, including the NorthEast Human Resources/Society for Human Resources Management's (SHRM) John D. Erdlen Five Star Award. She is a frequent keynote speaker and the author of the popular books *Indispensable Employees: How to Hire Them, How to Keep Them*, and *Love Your Work by Loving Your Life (LwL<sup>2</sup>)*.

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## What Would You Do?

### What would you do?

Janice has recently been hired as manager of an engineering department at TopCo. The company has long been committed to cultivating a diverse workforce, and Janice's new team reflects that diversity. Her on-site staff comprises men and women of various races and ethnicities. Janice's team also consists of a few engineers who work at satellite offices in other countries where TopCo is seeking to expand its markets.

Janice knows that part of her job is to ensure that TopCo benefits as much as possible from her team's diversity. And that means managing her employees' differences skillfully. She wonders how she might best approach the task as she eases into her new role.

### What would you do?

To leverage her team's diversity, Janice must cultivate an inclusive environment—one that makes all employees feel welcome and encourages them to achieve maximum performance and productivity. Tools such as mentoring and incentives will help her foster this environment and retain her team's talent. She should also know how to resolve any diversity-related conflicts that may arise in her group, and be willing to identify and challenge any inaccurate assumptions she may hold about ethnic and other differences. She and her team will need to explore ways to avoid common cross-cultural communication gaffes. Moreover, given TopCo's multinational goals, Janice must consider how her employees can use their familiarity with different cultures to serve new customers.

A diverse workforce provides many advantages to a company. How can you foster diversity and maximize the benefits?

## Topic Objectives

This topic helps you:

- Understand the unique value and challenges that come with a diverse workforce
- Manage diversity-related conflicts in your team
- Foster an inclusive work environment
- Leverage the advantages that diversity offers
- Recruit and retain diverse talent
- Communicate effectively with employees, partners, and customers from other cultures

## What is a diverse workforce?



As a manager, you've probably heard about "diversity initiatives" in your organization. But what *is* diversity? And why is it important?

*Diversity* is another word for *differences* between people. In an organizational setting, a diverse workforce comprises employees of various:

- Races
- Genders
- Ethnic backgrounds
- Ages
- Physical and cognitive abilities
- Sexual orientations
- Religious beliefs
- Learning and work styles
- Body types
- Work/life commitments

## Leadership Insight: The mix of experience

When I think of diversity, I think in many buckets of diversity. I am a woman, for example, and I recognize that gender sometimes is looked at as a component of diversity. I am a Hispanic woman or a Hispanic person, and I realize that that is also recognized as a component of diversity.

But when I look at diversity, more than a country or a gender, there are other buckets. Diversity comes from: What have been your previous experiences? What type of industries have you worked at before? What type of different bosses you have had over time? What types of different people you have managed over time?

And when you put all of those components in a bucket, that's called diversity. When I hire people or when I try to build a new team or try to reshape an existing team, I look for diversity in all of those buckets: diversity in countries, diversities in gender, diversities in industry experiences.

And when I put a team together, I recognize that building a team with all sorts of different buckets of experience actually helps my team to become more successful eventually.

When building a diverse team, consider differences in many categories, including industry and professional experience.

### **Esther Alegria**

#### **Vice President of Manufacturing and General Manager, Biogen Idec**

Esther Alegria is the Vice President of Manufacturing and the General Manager for Biogen Idec, a Pharmaceutical and Biotech industry leader. She began her career in the pharmaceutical industry as a Quality Control Technician at American Cyanamid and Warner Lambert.

For 11 years, Esther also worked for Wyeth Biotech in multiple capacities, including the development of quality control testing and as the Associate Director of Quality Assurance.

Prior to her current position as Vice President of Manufacturing for Biogen Idec, she served the company as Associate Director of Product Quality Management and Director of Quality Assurance/Quality Control.

Esther completed her doctorate in chemistry at the University of Hawaii.

### **Key Idea: Why a diverse workforce?**

#### **Key Idea**

Why build a diverse workforce? Many organizations encourage diversity because providing equal opportunity to everyone is the right thing to do. And in some countries, hiring and retaining a diverse workforce is also a matter of obeying antidiscrimination laws.

But companies have discovered that a diverse workforce also gives them important competitive advantages in the areas of talent recruitment and retention, employee commitment and productivity, and profitable innovation.

When an organization builds a reputation for valuing differences, it often is better able to attract and keep talented employees. These individuals know that the company will appreciate and utilize the skills, backgrounds, and knowledge they bring to the table.

When employees use their differences to identify business opportunities and generate new ideas, they more fully express themselves at work. This leads to greater commitment and higher productivity.

Diverse workforces are rich seedbeds for new business ideas.

For example, at one company, a disabilities task force thought of ways to make the firm's products accessible to people with physical limitations. As a result, the company won numerous contracts from government agencies that had a mandate to make accessibility of products a criterion in vendor selection.

How can your organization benefit from hiring and retaining a diverse workforce?

## Why now?

The competitive edge that a diverse workforce provides has become more essential than ever—owing to these key shifts in the business landscape:

- **Globalization:** Many companies now operate in numerous regions and countries. To attract and motivate different employees from around the globe, as well as win and keep customers in a multitude of environments, managers must understand and demonstrate respect for cultural differences.

For instance, when a major American company set up a division in Spain, it initially provoked conflict with Spanish labor unions by expecting its Spanish employees to conform to American work schedules. Only after hiring Spanish managers for its new operation did the company regain workers' trust. With their greater understanding of Spanish culture, the new managers were more successful in negotiating mutually agreeable schedules with the employees.

- **Changing labor pool:** Populations in many countries have grown more diverse, and labor pools reflect that diversity.

For example, in the United States, Hispanics and Asians are the fastest-growing populations. And in France and Great Britain, Arab populations are rising. Organizations hoping to acquire the human resources they need to function must hire and motivate a wider variety of employees than before.

- **Intensifying competition:** With change accelerating throughout the business world, companies are finding it increasingly difficult to stay ahead of the pack. By enabling employees to bring all of their unique qualities to work—including their differences—organizations stand a greater chance of maintaining an edge over rivals.

To illustrate, in one consumer-products firm, a group of Mexican employees used their understanding of Hispanic culture and tastes to propose a new snack food that appealed to a previously untapped Hispanic market—and became a \$100 million product.

## Diversity presents unique challenges

“ Diversity: the art of thinking independently together. ”  
–Malcolm Forbes

Though diversity offers major advantages, it can also present challenges. In particular, as people with very different beliefs, values, and priorities interact in the workplace, conflicts can arise.

Consider this example of how differences in work and nonwork commitments can create tension: Paolo and Tamara are senior accountants who report to Stavros. Paolo recently negotiated an arrangement with Stavros to leave the office early on Fridays so he could spend more time with his children. Tamara, a dedicated churchgoer, asks Stavros if she, too, can leave early once a week to attend a bible study class that's offered only on Friday afternoons. When Stavros says, "Sorry, no," Tamara concludes that he views her priorities as less important than Paolo's. Her resentment grows, and she begins to see company policies as unfair. Losing trust in Stavros and the company, she becomes reluctant to give her best on the job.

Some diversity-related conflicts arise from people's fear of being seen as prejudiced.

For instance, a 25-year-old manager avoids giving needed constructive feedback to her 50-year-old subordinate, fearing accusations of age discrimination. The employee thus never receives the information he needs to improve his performance on the job. In these kinds of situations, it's important for managers to determine whether they're dealing with a performance problem or a diversity-related problem.

When these sorts of diversity-related tensions and fears escalate, productivity and morale can suffer—and organizations miss out on the advantages that diversity provides.

Managers can surmount such challenges, if they:

- Correct their misperceptions about difference
- Deal effectively with diversity-related conflicts
- Foster a workplace that embraces differences as much as similarities
- Tap diversity's value
- Recruit and retain a diverse workforce
- Improve their ability to communicate with peers, employees, customers, and vendors from different cultures

**Note:** This online program is not intended as legal advice. If you encounter a diversity-related conflict that escalates in your team or department, consult your human resources group and/or legal counsel. They will be able to advise you on the specifics of your situation.

## Replace misperceptions with facts





A diverse workforce gives any company important competitive advantages.

For example, it enables the organization to attract and retain a variety of talented employees who generate creative ideas for new products and services.

However, misperceptions about diversity can prevent companies from gaining these advantages by planting the seeds for conflict in the workplace. Consider the following misperceptions, their consequences, and ideas for thinking differently about differences.

### Misperception #1: "Members of a particular group are all alike."

Human beings tend to lump others under a label and assume that all members of a particular group or culture share the same characteristics. Such beliefs are *stereotypes*—conventional, formulaic, and oversimplified conceptions, opinions, or images of particular groups. Examples may include:

- "Asians are smart and hardworking."
- "Californians are laid-back when it comes to business."
- "Men love sports."
- "Germans are efficient."
- "Americans are pushy negotiators."

When stereotypes are negative, they constitute *prejudice*—defined as an adverse judgment or opinion formed beforehand or without knowledge or examination of the facts. Assuming that all members of a particular group are the same can have damaging consequences in the workplace.

**Example:** Susanna, a manager at Marlon Media, believes that all men love sports. When the firm acquires an account with a leading golf-club manufacturer, Susanna immediately pulls Gerry, one of her most talented employees, off the health and beauty account he's been managing because she assumes he'd rather work with sporting equipment. However, Gerry has little interest in golf and would have preferred to continue promoting hair-care products. After one month in his new role, Gerry accepts a job offer from a competing organization.

**Fact:** Members of a particular group do *not* all necessarily share the same characteristics. To get the most from subordinates, managers must assess each employee's unique characteristics and strengths.

**To think differently about differences:** Identify the prejudices you hold about people different from you. Be honest with yourself, and challenge your beliefs. For example, recall individuals you know who do not fit the stereotypes of their ethnic group, age, gender, or some other defining characteristic. Consider ways in which *you* don't fit stereotypes applied to *your* group.

### Misperception #2: "We each have one identity."



Many people engage in either/or thinking about diversity.

For example, perhaps you believe that people are *either* black *or* white, female *or* male, young *or* old, rich *or* poor, conservative *or* liberal, and so forth.

Either/or thinking causes people to define themselves *in opposition to* others—which can spawn conflict in the workplace.

**Example:** When Emilio, a high-achieving salesperson who emigrated from Mexico fifteen years ago, is passed over for a promotion by Tom, his American boss, he wonders if discrimination was involved. He becomes critical around Tom, and their working relationship sours.

**Fact:** Every person has *multiple* identities. For instance, Tom is not just an American. He may also identify himself as a middle-aged man, a father, and an activist for liberal causes. He and Emilio may hold some of these identities in common. Perhaps, for instance, Emilio is also in his middle years, has children, and holds liberal views.

By becoming aware of their shared identities, Emilio and Tom may feel less in opposition to each other — and therefore may forge a more positive, productive working relationship.

**To think differently about differences:** Try this exercise: List *your* multiple identities, considering your home and personal life, as well as civic, professional, and other priorities. For example, "I'm a leader at my church, a marketing expert, and an animal rights activist."

Now look for identities you share with other individuals at work. Likewise, encourage your subordinates to discover their similar identities and to learn about one another's differences and similarities.

### Misperception #3: "People's identities don't change."

When managers assume that people's identities don't change, they may neglect to offer their subordinates valuable developmental opportunities.

**Example:** Tanya has long managed the benefits group in the human resources department of Harrington Associates, a firm based in London. Her subordinates include Barry, an Indian-born benefits specialist who has reported to Tanya for many years. A year ago, while lunching together in the cafeteria and conversing about identities, Barry said to Tanya, "I see myself as a Hindu first, an HR professional second, and an Indian third."

When the company decides to establish a satellite office in India, Tanya never considers whether Barry might be interested in taking an overseas assignment at the new office. After all, he himself had placed his Indian background in last place in his list of identities during that earlier lunchtime conversation.

Tanya doesn't realize that, in the past year, Barry's interest in his Indian heritage and culture has intensified and that he would welcome an opportunity to take on an assignment in India. Moreover, his interest in and familiarity with Indian culture would enable him to make a valuable contribution at the new office. Barry *and* the company lose out.

**Fact:** People's identities evolve as individuals acquire new experiences.

**To think differently about differences:** Ask yourself how your identities might be changing as you acquire new personal and professional experiences. Similarly, be open to the possibility that individual

employees may also see themselves in a different light as their life and work circumstances evolve. Avoid making assumptions about what each employee's priorities, interests, and goals might be based on what you currently know about their identities. Take time during informal one-on-one conversations and performance reviews to find out how each employee's view of him- or herself may be changing. Consider these changes' implications for their work performance and career aspirations.

### Misperception #4: "Members of the majority are most likely to be prejudiced."

Many people assume that prejudice flows in one direction: from members of the numerical majority toward those in the minority or in positions of less power. However, prejudice can come from anyone and be directed toward anyone.

**Example:** Herman, a 60-year-old manager at Poulin Enterprises, sometimes makes jokes about women during casual chats with colleagues at lunch. Martha, a 31-year-old employee in the same department, has overheard a few of these jokes and finds them highly offensive.

One day, Martha and Bette, a colleague, hear Herman telling another male manager that he's getting divorced. "Boy," Herman says, "all women are the same. They take everything we've got when they leave us, don't they?" Martha and Bette look at each other and roll their eyes. "The stupid old fool," Martha snaps, "it's about time his wife left him!" "I can't believe you have to work with him on that task force," Bette says. "Well, he's ancient, and a typical male," Martha replies, "I don't take anything he says seriously."

**Fact:** Prejudice doesn't only flow from members of the numerical majority toward those in the minority or in less powerful positions.

**To think differently about differences:** If you're a member of a numerical minority, watch for any tendencies within yourself to judge or look down on someone else based on their age, gender, race, or some other defining characteristic.

Being aware of and correcting your misperceptions about differences are important first steps to building an inclusive workplace. But it's not enough. In addition, you need to handle diversity-related conflicts effectively.

### The price of mishandling conflict



Diverse teams make better decisions than homogeneous ones, are more creative, and handle complex challenges more effectively. Yet when organizations manage diversity-related conflicts poorly, talented

performers flee in search of more welcoming environments. The result? The companies they've left fail to reap the benefits promised by diversity.

One way to deal more productively with diversity-related tensions is to understand what it feels like to be "different"—to be a member of the numerical minority or in a position of relatively little power.

## What it feels like to be "different"

“ Difference is the  
essence of humanity. ”  
–John Hume

In many companies, members of the numerical majority (for example, white managers in an organization that employs few blacks) hold prejudicial, deep-seated assumptions about members of the minority group. These assumptions create a demoralizing climate of tension and distrust for minority members—of which majority members remain unaware.

- **"I feel like a token."** Some black managers suspect that whites can't see past blacks' skin color.

For instance, at a management retreat, a newly hired African American VP of strategic planning meets key decision makers. They express no interest in her business expertise. Instead, they ask her to head up the company's new diversity committee.

- **"I feel marginalized."** Racial minorities and women often feel relegated to the sidelines during important business discussions.

For instance, during a strategy meeting, Manuela, a department head, offers a suggestion for implementing a new competitive strategy. The room is quiet until a white male manager echoes Manuela's idea. The CEO then expresses interest in the idea. Concluding that others aren't willing to hear her thoughts, Manuela declines to contribute during future meetings.

- **"I feel I have to work harder to demonstrate my worth."** Managers who are members of the numerical majority can define expectations for others that feel demeaning or unreasonably stringent.

To illustrate, when the leader of a small team comprising employees with college degrees hires several qualified people who have only a high school education, her boss begins requesting progress reports from these new hires that he'd never required before.

The message? "I expect your team's performance to drop because of the new staff with less education." Though the newly configured team performs well, the director feels worn out by the pressure to constantly defend her employees' worth through meaningless reports. The following year, she accepts a position at a competing firm.

- **"I don't fully trust you."** Sometimes members of the numerical minority doubt that their majority-member colleagues will support them if they make a mistake. So they avoid taking risks.

A case in point: After several drinks at a business dinner, Carla complains to Anton, her new colleague, that "homosexuals are always advocating their agenda." Anton is gay but has not told Carla about his sexual orientation. He decides to keep his distance from Carla—which hampers collaboration between their two departments.

## Activity: Identify the assumptions

Examine these scenarios and determine which assumptions are causing the value of diversity to remain unrealized.

Zaida, a market analyst for a small firm based in Michigan, started with the firm when she graduated from college six years ago. She excelled in the interview process, proving herself the best candidate among a field of highly-qualified applicants. She is dedicated and attentive to detail, for which she is well-respected by her colleagues. One day, she overhears her supervisor, Jack, say, "I know she practically wrote the whole thing, and she'd do a great job, but I can't have Zaida presenting our report to the board of directors. She's a young woman. And the board is comprised of older men. I just don't think they'll be receptive."

What kind of behavior is Zaida's supervisor displaying?

☐ Tokenism

**Not the best choice.** Zaida would be considered a token if she had been hired not on her own merits, but simply because she was a member of an underrepresented group. This does not appear to be the case.

☐ Distrust

**Not the best choice.** Actually, Zaida's supervisor believes that she would do a good job.

☐ Unfair expectations

**Not the best choice.** Zaida's supervisor values her work and does not appear to be applying an unfair standard.

☐ Marginalization

**Correct choice.** Even though her supervisor thinks highly of her work, he is excluding Zaida from a high-profile assignment because of a perceived bias against her gender and age. Although he was personally willing to hire her and ignore these biases, he is not willing to take the risk that the older generation running the board will be similarly receptive. This constitutes marginalization.

Ye-jin, a database specialist of Korean heritage, has been in her current position for two years. Other employees have been sent to a two-week training seminar when they reach the two-year mark. Nick, her supervisor, considers her a "clutch" player and is not willing to let her go for two weeks. He tells her "A hard worker like you? You don't need that seminar. I'll give you a couple of books and you can probably teach yourself the same material in a weekend."

☐ Tokenism

**Not the best choice.** Nick is not viewing Ye-jin as a token. He values her as a "clutch" player.

☐ Distrust

**Not the best choice.** Nick's decision not to send Ye-jin to the seminar does not stem from distrust. Actually, he "trusts" her to educate herself on her own time.

☐ Unfair expectations

**Correct choice.** Because Ye-jin has shown herself to be a self-starter, Nick might stereotype her as a "typical hard-working Asian." Hence, he does not see the need to provide the same opportunities for her to advance her skills that he provides for others. He is exhibiting an unfair expectation that she will educate herself on her own time.

☐ Marginalization

**Not the best choice.** Nick is not attempting to marginalize Ye-jin. He expects her to make valuable contributions, but he unreasonably expects her to educate herself on her own time.

Darell, an African-American, was recently hired as director of a research and development group because of his impeccable educational background and work record. There are no other employees from minority backgrounds at his level of management, however. During a lunch break, one of his co-workers remarked to a friend, "I'm sure he was hired just because they want our company to seem more racially diverse."

What kind of behavior is Darell's co-worker displaying?

☐ Tokenism

**Correct choice.** Although Darell was hired because of his qualifications, his colleagues are making the assumption that he was hired to promote the organization's reputation as an employer of minorities.

☐ Distrust

**Not the best choice.** Distrust is not the primary concern in this case.

☐ Unfair expectations

**Not the best choice.** Darell's colleagues are not displaying unfairness in their expectations of his performance.

☐ Marginalization

**Not the best choice.** There's no evidence that Darell's colleagues are trying to leave him out of important discussions and decisions.

Miriam is a product quality assurance manager. Recently, Miriam's psychiatrist left a message for her through her voicemail at work. Miriam's supervisor, Colleen, accidentally picked up the phone while Miriam was listening to the message. Colleen, aware that Miriam is under a psychiatrist's care, decided to relieve her of a high-profile, high-stress project.

What kind of behavior is Colleen displaying?

☐ Tokenism

**Not the best choice.** This scenario does not involve someone who has been hired so that the company can present a diverse image.

☐ Distrust

**Correct choice.** Now that Colleen is aware that Miriam is seeking medical assistance with personal problems, she distrusts Miriam's ability to complete difficult projects. Even if her intentions are honorable—to protect Miriam from excessive stress, perhaps—she is making unnecessary assumptions about the duration of the stressor and Miriam's abilities to juggle work and personal issues.

- ☐ Unfair expectations

**Not the best choice.** Colleen is not setting unreasonably high standards.

- ☐ Marginalization

**Not the best choice.** Colleen is not yet trying to prevent Miriam from taking part in important discussions. However, if she doesn't clarify Miriam's situation and find an appropriate way for managing it, her bias may lead Colleen to marginalize Miriam in the long-term.

## Resolve diversity-related conflicts

When a diversity-related conflict arises, the person in the numerical minority may feel an intense need to be proven "right" about having experienced prejudicial treatment based on his or her minority status. Meanwhile, the individual in the numerical majority can experience an equally intense need to be "innocent" of committing an offense.

With such polarized needs, the two stand little chance of moving beyond the conflict. The following steps can help you uncover what's fueling diversity-related tension and how you and the other person might interact more productively.

- **Step 1: Reflect.** If someone accuses you of prejudice, or you feel certain someone has shown prejudice toward you, pause to consider the facts of the situation and your goals before responding.

For example, when Sondra, a 24-year-old associate overheard two senior partners joking that "things ran so much more smoothly before so many demanding, attention-seeking kids joined our firm," she checked her anger. Then she thought about how the incident could help her achieve a goal that mattered more to her than being "right." Sondra's goal? Paving the way for a new generation of lawyers at the firm.

- **Step 2: Connect.** Ask questions to better understand the other person's behavior and attitudes. Then share your own perspective.

To illustrate, Sondra set out to understand what experiences lay under the partners' disparaging humor about the recent hires. She asked them, "What was it like for you when so many young people joined the firm? What did you feel you lost? Gained?" The men opened up, and Sondra explained the feelings she experienced when well-meaning colleagues made unflattering comments about recent entrants to the workforce. The mutual openness diffused tensions and enabled the colleagues to focus once more on meeting important strategic goals. And in future meetings, Sondra was able to convince the partners that being receptive to new voices would benefit the entire organization.



- **Step 3: Question yourself.** Ask yourself how your desire to be proven right about a perceived offense—or proven innocent of offending someone else—might have distorted your view of the situation.

For instance, Edy, a 39-year-old American manager, succeeded 59-year-old Brian as CEO at an international consultancy based in London. Brian, who remained as an adviser, told Edy that her push to market more vigorously to American women in their 30s was "unwise." Though she initially took offense, Edy asked Brian to elaborate. He expressed concern that Edy's strategy would narrow the firm's market and alienate the current customer base of older Western European men. Edy realized she needed to explain how her strategy would support the firm's mission. When she articulated her reasoning—and demonstrated her commitment to retaining current customers—Brian saw the value in her strategy. The tension between them eased, and Edy was able to move forward with implementing her new direction.

- **Step 4: Shift your mind-set.** Ask yourself what changes you could make to improve your workplace relationships.

For example, Richard, a French executive at a Paris-based consultancy, was frustrated with Suha, his Egyptian business partner. Richard saw Suha as controlling and critical when they took on major new consulting engagements. Rather than trying to persuade Suha to alter his behavior, Richard realized that the only thing he *could* change was himself. He initiated a conversation with Suha to learn more about his concerns. When Richard discovered that Suha's behavior stemmed from his worry about the firm's increasing workload, he agreed to shoulder more of the load. Their working relationship moved from prickly to positive.

## Leadership Insight: Recognize your biases

There's a Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. When you walk into the museum, you gather in a small group, you wait for your guide. The guide says to you, "There are two doors through which you may enter the museum. One door, you can see, is marked 'Prejudiced,' the other door, you can see, is marked 'Not Prejudiced.'"

Now, you choose the door that is most representative of you and how you feel about yourself. Are you prejudiced or are you not prejudiced?" So, of course we all stand there going, "Hmm, feels like a trick." Right?

One manager in the group — and he was a manager — stepped forward and tried to walk through the door marked "Not Prejudiced." And you guess it — it was locked.

Now, there are irritated people standing there who have just been labeled "prejudiced," even though they thought they weren't. You go into the museum and you are educated then about what they mean by "prejudice."

It's about preferences, leanings. I call them leanings. It's about things you're not even aware of. So, what I encourage people to do all the time is to think about their leanings. Do you lean toward or away from someone with a particular accent? Like I love a French accent, but there may be another accent where I just kind of, "Oo, wow, that grates on my nerves somehow."

Do you lean toward or away from somebody with different skin color, educational level? Think about your leanings. I know people, for example, who lean toward or away from extroverts versus introverts. Or flip it the other way around. They prefer the introvert.

And the goal here is not to label yourself or feel guilty about your leanings, but to recognize them. Because you see how it plays out in the workplace — we hire sometimes based on our leanings. We promote sometimes based on our leanings. We give developmental opportunities sometimes based on our leanings.

So, for us to be fair, to be viewed as fair by all of our employees, we really must take a look at our leanings — we take action in some cases — and make sure that in fact we are being fair in the workplace.

The first step to creating a diverse workplace is for people to reflect on their own preferences and prejudices.

**Sharon Jordan-Evans**  
**President, The Jordan Evans Group**

Sharon Jordan-Evans is a pioneer in the field of employee retention and engagement.

She coauthored the Wall Street Journal bestseller “Love ‘Em or Lose ‘Em: Getting Good People to Stay” with Beverly Kaye, which is now in its fourth edition and has been translated into 20 languages.

Her follow-up book, “Love It, Don’t Leave It: 26 Ways to Get What You Want at Work,” also became a Wall Street Journal bestseller and has been translated into 15 languages.

Sharon runs a consulting company, The Jordan Evans Group, where she coaches high-performing executives and speaks to audiences about engagement and retention.

As a corporate coach and keynote presenter, she works with Fortune 500 companies such as AMEX, Boeing, Disney, Monster, Lockheed, and Sony. Her Web site is: [www.jeg.org](http://www.jeg.org)

## Define "inclusiveness"



How might your organization reap the benefits promised by diverse workforces and teams—including increased access to new and existing markets, higher morale, and greater productivity? One powerful practice is to foster an inclusive environment.

In an *inclusive environment*, managers welcome the many differences that distinguish their employees, and they leverage those differences to define new goals, improve processes, and boost team productivity. Companies that cultivate an inclusive environment thus promote equal opportunity—while also valuing differences as much as they do similarities.

As employees in inclusive organizations see their unique characteristics generating positive business results, they feel valued precisely for what makes them special. As a result, their commitment to their jobs—and the company—grows.

Fostering an inclusive environment isn't easy, owing to two existing diversity approaches that get in the way. Think of these approaches as "assimilation" and "differentiation."

## Assimilation

In organizations that approach diversity through assimilation, people stress the fact that "we're all the same." Assimilation promotes fair hiring, as managers strive to recruit diverse employees.

But this approach also has a major disadvantage: it encourages everyone to adhere to the corporate culture and codes of conduct defining how to look, act, and get ahead. This expectation of uniform behavior puts pressure on employees to downplay differences among themselves—which can carry a high price for their company. Here's an example:

Wu, a Chinese man who works in FreiCo's advertising department, believes that FreiCo's advertising strategy isn't appropriate for the Chinese marketplace. But he hesitates to cite his personal knowledge of Chinese culture in order to defend his opinion. Why? He fears that others will see him as importing inappropriate attitudes into an organization that prides itself on "sameness" and blindness to cultural differences. As a result, FreiCo never hears—or profits from—Wu's well-informed ideas.

## Differentiation

In organizations that take a differentiation approach to diversity, people stress the fact that "we celebrate differences." Differentiation enables companies to expand into new and existing markets by matching diverse employees to niche customer segments distinguished by gender, race, age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other defining characteristics.

However, differentiation also has an important downside: employees can feel they're being pigeonholed or exploited as tokens. They may also feel excluded from opportunities lying beyond the niche into which they've been slotted. Equally problematic, their ideas don't always get integrated into their company's mainstream work. Consider this illustration:

BestBank, a U.S. investment services company, aggressively expands into several Asian countries. To ensure that managers in the new offices have credibility with local customers and knowledge of local markets, BestBank hires Asians who live locally to manage its foreign offices. The new businesses prosper.

Yet BestBank as a whole never profits as much as it should have from this approach. Why? The bank's country teams all operate as spin-off companies, so no one in the home office can discern what makes the teams so successful. For instance, which investment banking practices would prove profitable only in particular cultures?

Because it followed a differentiated diversity strategy, BestBank won't learn from the country teams' best practices—and can't put these practices to use in the larger organization. Moreover, BestBank has made itself vulnerable: if numerous managers from the Chinese team, for example, were to leave the company, BestBank would not know which skills to seek in successor managers. Thus the company might have difficulty re-creating its previous performance in that office.

## Inclusion: a third way

Because both assimilation and differentiation contain serious drawbacks, companies would do better to adopt a third approach that *transcends* the two existing ways. Many diversity experts think of this approach as "inclusion."

In a company that fosters inclusion, employees' diverse perspectives are incorporated into the way business is conducted—changing things for the better. Here's one illustration:

Harmon & Hays, a small public-interest law firm based in Los Angeles, had an all-white legal staff that served an exclusively white female clientele. In light of the firm's mandate to advocate on behalf of all women, the attorneys were troubled by this homogeneity. To correct the situation, the firm hired Soledad, a Hispanic attorney.

Soledad brought in clients from her own community, demonstrating Harmon & Hays's commitment to serving all women. But even more valuable, she offered new ideas about which kinds of cases the firm should take on. For example, she suggested pursuing precedent-setting litigation that challenges English-speaking-only policies.

The firm had previously ignored such policies because they didn't fall under the purview of their traditional affirmative-action work. Soledad helped her colleagues see the link between English-only policies and employment issues for large groups of women—such as recent immigrants—clients the company had earlier ignored.

Soledad thus expanded notions of what constituted "relevant" issues for the firm. She enhanced not only the quality of Harmon & Hays's work but its ability to achieve its mission.

## Key Idea: Craft a culture of inclusion

### Key Idea

One way to create a culture of inclusion is to foster open discussion of cultural backgrounds.

For instance, a food company's chemistry department has employees from numerous different cultures. The department manager routinely expresses interest in the background of individual employees and engages them in conversation about their experiences.

Li-Shen Chang, a Chinese chemist, is inspired to draw on his familiarity with Chinese cooking—not his scientific expertise—to solve a soup-flavoring problem that has been frustrating the department.

In an inclusive environment, managers demonstrate their belief that good ideas can come from anyone.

For example, at TopCo, Janice has decided to launch a series of weekly planning breakfasts open to people from all hierarchical levels in the engineering department.

With this move, she is sending the message to her subordinates that she values their ideas—regardless of their differences or position in the department.

In inclusive, diverse workplaces, people share a broader range of ideas and feelings more frequently than they do in homogenous organizations. Not surprisingly, this variety can spark tensions, and people may put forth perspectives that clash.

To ensure that employees continue to feel safe in expressing themselves, set a tone of honest discourse.

For example, during one of the breakfast meetings, Janice observes that LaNita and Hank have opposing views on the department's proposed project plan. Janice responds to this situation by saying, "LaNita and Hank, you really seem to disagree about the direction our next project should take. Can you each say more about what's causing the intensity of your disagreement? And would you each describe your line of thinking in more detail, so we can agree on how to move forward?"

In this situation, Janice diffused a potentially explosive disagreement between two employees by acknowledging the tensions and resolving them swiftly and sensitively.

How can you craft a culture of inclusion in *your* organization?

### Activity: Spot the inclusive culture

Assimilation, differentiation, and inclusion are three different approaches to diversity. Only an inclusive culture will allow an organization to enjoy the full benefits of a diverse workforce.

A substantial majority of employees in PiCorp's manufacturing division are of a certain ethnicity, while this ethnicity is poorly represented in other divisions.

Which type of culture does this scenario describe?

☐ Assimilation

**Not the best choice.** This scenario describes a culture of differentiation. PiCorp's differentiated approach prevents it from experiencing the benefits of its diverse workforce. Employees in manufacturing may feel pigeonholed, or frustrated if there are not opportunities for them to move to positions in other parts of the company. Also, PiCorp will suffer if these employees are not well-integrated into the company as a whole, since they may provide valuable insights that could advance the company's goals.

☐ Differentiation

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At JelliCo, there is a highly structured corporate culture, and a definite set of expectations for the behavior, dress, and attitudes that can be expressed in the workplace.

Which type of culture does this scenario describe?

☐ Assimilation

**Correct choice.** It appears that employees are expected to conform to a uniform standard for behavior at JelliCo. In a setting that emphasizes "sameness," employees might not feel comfortable talking about their unique perspectives and diverse experiences. As a result, JelliCo may not benefit as much as it could from the diversity in its workforce.

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Jacob recently orchestrated a meeting between two of his subordinates, who served in the military, and his supervisor, who is considering ways to market the company's services to military families at a nearby base.

Which type of culture does this scenario describe?



☐ Assimilation

**Not the best choice.** This scenario describes a culture of inclusion. Jacob and his supervisor are actively soliciting the diverse perspectives that employees can contribute. In an inclusive environment, employees' perspectives are incorporated into the way business is conducted—changing things for the better.

☐ Differentiation

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☐ Inclusion

**Correct choice.** This example illustrates an inclusive culture. Jacob and his supervisor are actively soliciting the diverse perspectives that employees can contribute. In an inclusive environment, employees' perspectives are incorporated into the way business is conducted—changing things for the better.

## Key Idea: Link diversity to business goals

### Key Idea

To extract maximum value from your diverse team, you need to enable every employee to perform to his or her full potential. That may require you to clarify the link between diversity and business goals, expand your definition of "diversity," and challenge damaging beliefs about differences.

For instance, do you envision improving sales among existing customers? Expanding into new markets?

Now determine how diversity can help your team achieve those goals.

Articulate your thoughts to your group. At one company, a product development manager told his employees, "Our goals include serving soon-to-be-retired individuals and women-owned start-ups. I need you to draw on your personal experiences as representatives of these groups to generate ideas for services that may appeal to them."

Don't assume that each employee knows how his or her unique talents can help bring about success. Ensure that your staff understand the organization's goals, and then discuss how each person can contribute to the achievement of those objectives.

By calling attention to differences among your subordinates and showing how this diversity can help the company reach strategic goals, you send the message that you value each employee's contributions. Equally important, you give every subordinate an opportunity to generate valuable business results.

Diversity is not just a good idea; it's good business.

## Leadership Insight: Tomorrow's leaders

Some of the pitfalls that we have found in organizations when they set out to develop their current and future leadership are that, number one; they rely on mental maps that really speak to yesterday's business model and not tomorrow's.

And I think that's perhaps the most dangerous one. So we think about spotting people, cultivating people, nurturing people, developing people, promoting people who look and think and talk much the same that we do, as the current leadership is. And I think that's really dangerous.

It chokes off any sense of vitality, any sense of difference or diversity inside of an organization. So I think one of the things that organizations need to do is to be aware that leaders can emerge from a variety of sources, from a variety of mindsets, and a variety of perspectives.

And so not only is that important from an organizational perspective, it's important from individual leaders' perspectives when they are thinking about their own team, their own people. There could very well be people on your team who might think very differently from how you think.

And so we need to open our minds up a little bit and understand where business is going, understand that our customer's expectations are changing. So therefore, we need to cast a much, much broader net in terms of what our prospective leadership pipeline might look like.

It's important to be aware of organizational biases when identifying and cultivating new leaders.

### **Doug Ready** **Founder and President, ICEDR**

Doug Ready is the founder and President of ICEDR, the world's premier global learning network in global talent development.

Doug is an active consultant, helping CEOs, top teams, and senior executives develop organizational and leadership resources and HR development practices to sustain global competitiveness. He is considered one of the world's leading authorities on strategic talent management and executive development.

He has authored a number of highly popular Harvard Business Review and Sloan Management Review articles, including; "Winning the Race for Talent in Emerging Markets," "Enabling Bold Visions," "Make Your Company a Talent Factory," "How to Grow Great Leaders," and "Leading at the Enterprise Level." Apart from his work with ICEDR, Doug is a visiting professor at London Business School.

## Expand your diversity definition

“ We need diversity of thought in the world to face the new challenges. ”  
–Tim Berners-Lee

Envision diversity initiatives as encompassing *all* employees—not just members of minority groups.

For example, suppose you're a manager working in the Northeast region of the United States.

If your goal is to assemble a team representing a wide range of ethnicities, genders, ages, and abilities, don't ignore 45-year-old white males. Omitting them from the team would be just as exclusionary as leaving out representatives from minority groups. Moreover, like any other demographic category, 45-year-old white males constitute a potentially profitable market.

Indeed, before implementing any diversity effort, ask yourself a key question: "Will this initiative contribute to everyone's success in my team? Or, will it produce an advantage for only one or certain groups?" The most valuable diversity initiatives benefit everyone.

For instance, assembling a task force to explore ways for a minority ethnic group to advance more easily in your unit ultimately helps everyone. Why? Generally, the more diverse the unit's leadership ranks become, the more creative ideas they will generate for improving processes or better serving customers. The more creatively your unit operates, the more successful it becomes—which can lead to rewards for everyone.

## Expose and challenge exclusionary beliefs

“ If we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity. ”  
–John F. Kennedy

Beliefs about the personal qualities required to get ahead in your company can unwittingly bar certain groups from opportunities to be hired *and* to give their best on the job. By exposing and challenging these beliefs, you remove those obstacles so that your company can extract more value from differences.

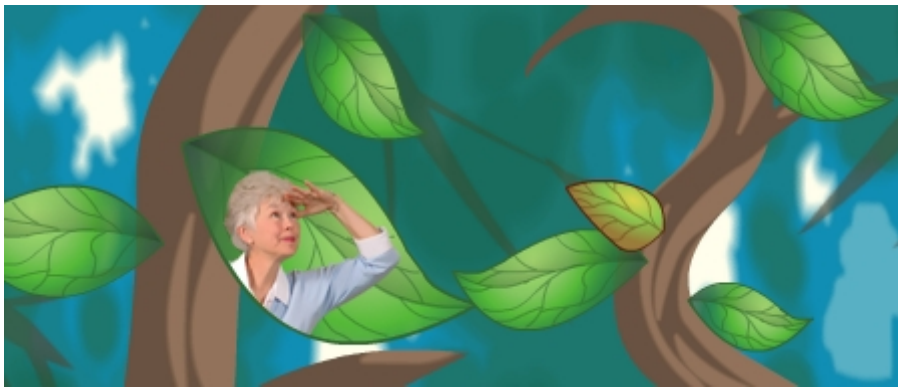
To illustrate, at InfoTech, which employs mostly men, one manager cited "ability to work with people" and "compassion" as prerequisites for promotion to leadership positions. But then he admitted, "That's the *official* story. In truth, it's aggressiveness that *really* gets people hired and promoted here. And most women just don't have that trait."

At InfoTech, the belief that women can't be "aggressive" blocks qualified female employees from being hired and advancing to leadership positions.

To hire and promote more women—and thereby gain the benefits that diversity offers—managers at InfoTech would need to first reexamine their actual criteria for promotion, asking "Do aggressive leaders truly get better results than compassionate ones?" They would also benefit from challenging their beliefs about women, asking, "Are most women really incapable of being aggressive when the need arises?"

In addition to the above suggestions, addressing the unique challenges of recruiting diverse employees can help you tap diversity's power.

## Unique challenges



Many managers encounter frustrating obstacles in trying to recruit a diverse team. For example:

- "I've looked for diverse job candidates, but I just can't find many in this area."
- "The HR department found diverse candidates for a position, but I wasn't confident that they were the best qualified for the job. I don't want to hire diverse team members just for the sake of diversity."
- "Though we have diversity in our hourly-paid workforce, there's little of it in the middle and senior management ranks. Qualified diverse candidates are shying away from our company because of this."

How to surmount these challenges? You may need to stretch beyond your usual recruiting tactics in order to find diverse, qualified candidates and persuade them to join your team. The following ideas can help.

## Expand your recruiting strategies

If you're having trouble recruiting additional diverse team members, consider using multicultural marketing approaches to identify the media through which people from different cultural groups get their information.

Some examples of media outlets could be:

- Ethnic radio and TV stations
- Community newspapers
- Trade journals
- The Internet

Once you've identified each group's preferred media, advertise job openings in those media for each group you're targeting.

Also, join forces with organizations that service the social, civic, religious, and educational needs of the groups whose representation you're seeking to improve in your team.

For instance, suppose you want to recruit additional people of color in your department. You discover that a local community center runs a weekend program for young people of color on how to plan their careers. You invite one of your direct reports to give a short presentation on career management to attendees at the program. The payoff? You get your company's name out to the local community, and you identify possible future hires for your department.

## Seek assistance from within your company

Your company's current employees can also help. Individuals within your organization that represent groups you're interested in recruiting may know qualified individuals who fit your desired profile. Suggest that your organization create an employee referral bonus program, whereby employees would get rewarded for finding qualified diverse job candidates, if such a program does not already exist.

Your organization may also benefit from the power of employee affinity groups. Suggest to your HR department or senior leadership that members of diverse groups throughout your organization form groups to "sell" your company to potential job candidates.

For example, an indigenous people's group could talk with candidates as well as community and educational groups about your organization, what it's like to work there, and how they've advanced in the company.

## "Sell" your company

It's not enough to locate potential diverse new hires; you also have to persuade qualified candidates to work for you. The following techniques can help:

- **Tout your company's progress in hiring for diversity.** Even if the organization overall still has a way to go in its diversity efforts, point out to qualified candidates what you've achieved so far.

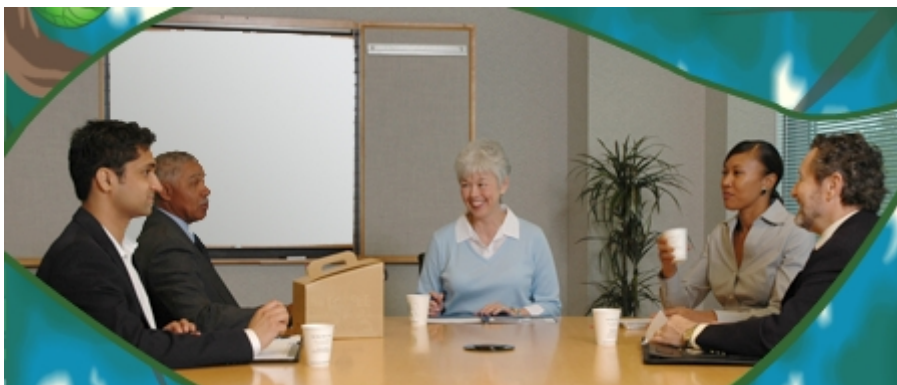
For example, "We've increased the percentage of women in middle and upper management from 35 percent to 45 percent over the past two years. We know we need to do more, but we've made a good start and are working to correct things."

- **Emphasize the advantages of working for your organization.** If your department or company offers advantages over rival organizations, explain those advantages to diverse job candidates.

For instance, perhaps you foster employees' career development by offering them special "stretch" assignments that enable them to strengthen their skills. Or maybe you've defined job roles and work schedules in such a way that everyone in your department is able to balance his or her work and personal or family commitments.

Once you've recruited diverse employees, your work doesn't stop there. You also need to retain them.

## Don't stop with recruiting



Recruiting the diverse employees you need to help your company stay competitive isn't enough. You also have to *keep* them. Retention can be challenging. This is especially true if the diverse employees you've recruited don't feel welcome and appreciated. Recently recruited employees may also leave if

they've come from other countries and have difficulty understanding your company's cultural standards.

To retain members of your diverse team, you may need to reexamine your human capital systems—including incentives, work/life programs, professional development initiatives, performance appraisals, and mentoring mechanisms.

## Reexamine incentives

Start by taking a look at the incentives—financial and nonfinancial—you use to reward your team. Ask yourself: "Do these incentives send the message that we value diversity in this group? Do they encourage people to learn about one another's differences and use them to improve business processes and achieve important goals? Are they valued by all members of my staff?"

For example, a weekend getaway for two as a reward for good performance may be ideal for some members of your staff. But it wouldn't be as useful for an employee with several children who may be reluctant to spend a weekend away from his kids—and who would have to take on the extra expense of hiring a babysitter.

Based on your answers to the above questions, consider how you might change your incentive systems to better retain your diverse team. If money is tight, think about nonfinancial or low-cost rewards—such as the opportunity to head up a major project, attend a conference, or participate in an in-house seminar of interest.

## Tailor work/life programs

Offer a range of policies to suit the diversity of your employees' work/life needs.

For instance, Lourdes, a manager at Prime Co., knew that a disproportionate number of her company's employees in their 40s and 50s shouldered responsibility for their immediate family *and* their extended family. To save these employees from burnout, Lourdes began offering flextime and telecommuting for subordinates who had job responsibilities that could be carried out at any time and from any location.

In tailoring your work/life programs, make sure that one group's work/life needs don't overshadow another's.

For example, don't always depend on young, single employees to shoulder workloads of individuals who regularly leave early for family commitments.

Also, make sure that your approach to work/life integration matches what you told candidates during job interviews. Too many managers tout their company's commitment to work/life balance in order to win talented new employees—without taking into account that this commitment varies across departments. A newly hired employee accepts the job offer and then learns that, owing to the nature of their assignments, people in his department work longer hours than employees in most other departments.

## Develop employees' professional skills



Help diverse subordinates use their unique experiences to hone their on-the-job skills and advance in their career.

To illustrate, suppose you discover that Victor, a devout Catholic in your unit, volunteers for fund-raising at his neighborhood church and manages several youth groups in his off-hours. Through talking with him about these civic commitments, you realize that Victor has acquired some valuable skills—namely, strategic planning, change management, negotiation, and financial savvy. These abilities are essential for an upcoming special project in your department.

You encourage Victor to extract lessons from his community work and apply them in "stretch" assignments on the job.

For example, you invite him to head up a task force charged with introducing a new customer service process to your team. This opportunity helps *Victor* further strengthen his change management skills. And it enables your *department* to improve its processes and enhance customer loyalty.

## Customize performance appraisals

Customize developmental goals introduced through performance appraisals to each employee's unique circumstances.

For example, during Victor's next performance appraisal meeting, you invite him to sign up for an internal training course that helps new managers further strengthen their leadership skills.

Here's another example.

Suppose that Dianna, a new mother who works in your unit, has negotiated a reduced workweek (with corresponding reduction in pay) so she can spend more time with her infant son. When conducting your annual performance appraisal for Dianna, allow for her part-time status while evaluating her on-the-job results. That is, don't expect her to produce the same volume of work in a 32-hour week as a 40-hour-a-week employee in the same job would produce. Instead, focus the performance appraisal on how well she met the goals, deadlines, and quality requirements in her negotiated agreement.

## Establish mentors

Identify mentors who can provide diverse employees with instruction, coaching, and long-term, close developmental support as they progress through their careers. Mentors can come from within your department or from outside sources, such as other teams in the organization or external professional associations. Mentors from outside your functional area may be able to offer their protégés broader perspectives on the workings of the company.

Some employees may benefit from mentors who are similar in age or who come from the same ethnic group. Others may prefer mentors with a different perspective or background. Both have benefits. For example:

- **Mentors with different backgrounds.** A mentor who has a different background from his or her protégé can often help that person understand what it is like to be a member of the mentor's group.

For instance, consider a white male who is a senior executive at a manufacturing plant. He is mentoring a female African American middle manager who is struggling in her management of an assembly line composed primarily of white males. As her mentor, he may be able to help her deal with employees' resistance to her ideas by sharing some of his own experiences with leading change.

- **Mentors with similar backgrounds.** Matching mentors with protégés from the same groups can offer unique benefits as well, such as enabling protégés to feel a greater sense of camaraderie and support. If it's impossible to find the ideal match for a particular employee, try to identify mentors who understand and appreciate the unique career challenges faced by the particular employee in question, as well as his or her special contributions.

To illustrate, perhaps Jon, a white employee in the marketing group, would make an excellent mentor for Taja, your Pakistani-born employee. That's because Jon's sister-in-law, Mikela, was born to Pakistani immigrants. Over the years, Jon has watched as Mikela has encountered challenges but nevertheless advanced through her career as a product developer. Because Jon is familiar with Mikela's experiences, he can support Taja as she progresses along her professional path.

Changing human-capital systems to retain your diverse team can help you get the most value from the differences among your subordinates. Sharpening your understanding of the cultural diversity that characterizes today's globalized business world is also important.

## Activity: Developing retention strategies

Retaining diverse talent requires that you understand your employees needs and priorities and create strategies to meet those needs.

Gordon is very pleased to have Sherry, a promising new hire, in his department. She accepted the job offer because she was promised a flexible schedule, which is important to her since she must care for her two children as well as her father, who has a debilitating illness. However, her team's project manager recently instituted recurring end-of-day group meetings to gather information from team members. Sherry must pick up her children from school, but the end-of-day meetings interfere. What steps should Gordon take to ensure that Sherry stays with the company?

- ☐ Ask the project manager to reschedule the end-of-day meetings or allow Sherry to participate via teleconferencing

**Correct choice.** Gordon must address the meeting schedule immediately. Otherwise, the company has broken its promise of a flexible schedule, and Sherry would have little choice but to seek other employment options.

- ☐ Invite Sherry to represent the company at a trade show in a vacation destination

**Not the best choice.** While other employees might be excited about this opportunity, it would likely not be ideal for Sherry. Traveling to the trade show might create a hardship for Sherry, who would need reliable care for her children and father.

- ☐ Reassign some of Sherry's projects to one of her coworkers who does not have dependents

**Not the best choice.** The issue is not the *amount* of work that Sherry has; instead, she needs the flexibility to work during hours that will not conflict with her family commitments. Additionally, it would not be equitable to take care of Sherry's work/life needs at the expense of another employee's.

- ☐ Provide opportunities for Sherry to attend training courses in the skill areas she wants to develop

**Not the best choice.** The issue is not Sherry's skill development needs. However, once Gordon has addressed Sherry's scheduling needs, he would be wise to provide her with training or other opportunities for development. Sherry is not likely stay in his department if she doesn't have opportunities for career growth.

Katya is becoming concerned about whether Shane, a talented and dependable employee, will stay with SkyCo. Katya overheard Shane tell a group of his peers that he feels intellectually stifled in his current position. Also, Shane is the only African-American in the local branch office, and Katya wonders if he feels welcomed and included in SkyCo's culture. What step should Katya *not* take to retain Shane?

- ☐ Recruit Jarvis, a semi-retired African-American SkyCo executive who delights in helping young employees find their way, to mentor Shane by e-mail and phone

**Not the best choice.** Katya should take this step. Jarvis might be an ideal mentor for Shane; this idea is certainly worth a try. However, managers should not automatically assume that employees would always fare best with a mentor from the same cultural background. Someone from a different background could provide valuable insights and a fresh perspective.

- ☐ Offer stretch projects that will allow Shane to use his creativity

**Not the best choice.** Katya should take this step. From his comments to his peers, it sounds like Shane would be energized by creative projects that would challenge him to learn new skills.

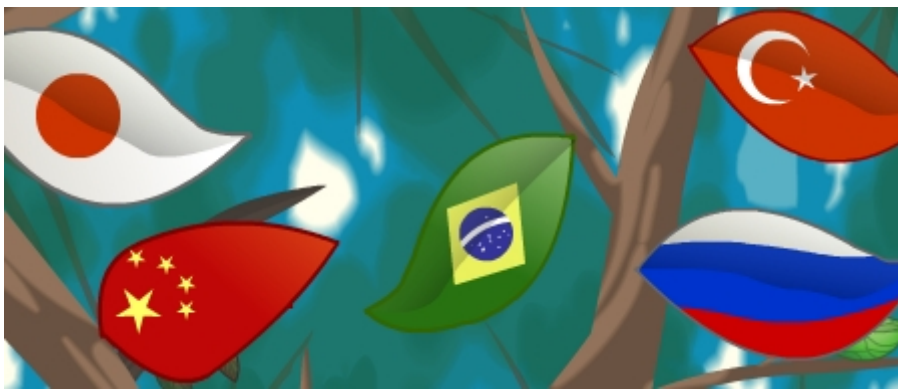
- ☐ Nominate Shane to participate in the marketing department's quarterly Idea-fest, a brainstorming session open to employees from all departments

**Not the best choice.** Katya should take this step. This opportunity would meet Shane's need for more intellectual stimulation, exercise his creative faculties, and provide him with exposure to other functions within the company.

- ☐ Organize an African-American awareness luncheon, and ask Shane to speak to the group about his cultural background and experiences

**Correct choice.** An African-American awareness luncheon would single Shane out and might focus unwanted attention on his different background, which could make him extremely uncomfortable—the opposite of the intention.

## Culture's powerful influence



In today's age of global business, you probably hear the word *culture* used often. But what *is* culture, exactly? A person's culture determines his or her:

- **Beliefs**—about how the world works and how people should interact
- **Behaviors**—including gestures, use of eye contact, facial expressions, and rituals for greeting
- **Values**—what's considered important, such as family or personal life, career, religion, and social responsibility

Culture can be defined not only at a national level but also at the regional, organizational, or group level.

For example, people living and working in the American Northeast and Southeast may have different beliefs, behaviors, and values (*regional* cultural differences). People in a large consumer-products corporation may have a very different culture from people who work for a small, not-for-profit entity (*organizational* cultural differences). And people who work in a marketing department may do business differently than those who work in the information technology function (*group* cultural differences).

Given the increase in international business that many organizations are experiencing, this topic focuses primarily on national and regional cultural differences.

## How culture gets expressed

“If we are to achieve a richer culture, rich in contrasting values, we must recognize the whole gamut of human potentialities.”

–Margaret Mead

Culture influences virtually all aspects of business. For example, people from different cultures may carry out the following activities in very different ways:

- Negotiating
- Communicating about business and nonbusiness topics
- Building working relationships
- Resolving conflicts
- Defining work procedures and ethical behavior
- Making decisions
- Greeting one another
- Establishing deadlines and meeting times
- Dressing
- Entertaining and dining
- Delivering presentations

- Evaluating business ideas and proposals
- Setting business priorities
- Relating to authority figures
- Selling and marketing to customers

When people from different cultures do business together, misunderstandings can result.

For example, Malcolm, a manager at a New York firm, travels to Tokyo to negotiate a sales deal with a customer. That evening, he and several managers from the Tokyo firm meet for dinner. As cocktails are served, Malcolm begins discussing the deal's details. He doesn't realize that, in many Asian cultures, people often prefer to establish relationships through nonbusiness conversation first. The Tokyo team members exchange uncomfortable glances and remain quiet during the rest of the evening. Malcolm returns to New York with no deal in hand.

## Strengthen your cultural intelligence

“ In order to appreciate the cultures of another nation, one needs to go there, know the people, and mingle with the culture of that country. ”  
—David Rockefeller

Possibilities abound for misunderstandings based on cultural differences. How do you avoid business gaffes based on cultural misunderstandings? Strengthen your **cultural intelligence (CI)**—your ability to adapt to a new cultural setting, learn patterns of social interactions specific to that setting, and respond in ways considered appropriate by people from that culture.

By emulating others' cultural "rules" when interacting with them, you demonstrate your esteem for them and for how they conduct business in their own culture. They respond by becoming more trusting and open—essential ingredients in any business interaction.

To build your CI, you can read books and articles or view videos and DVDs about cultural differences, as well as attend events and activities specific to particular groups. You can also get help from a coach specializing in cultural diversity, or simply begin to foster relationships with people from groups that are different from yours. They can help you better understand and navigate your way through their culture.

## Key Idea: Components of cultural intelligence

### Key Idea

In addition to educating yourself on other people's cultures, you can also master these three components of CI:

**Use your "Head" to observe and learn about others.** Look for clues to a culture's shared understandings.

For example, suppose you're about to take part in a series of meetings with a negotiating team from another country. During your early encounters with members of the team, observe their attitudes toward time. (Are they always punctual—or "fashionably" late?) Watch behavior regarding deadlines. (Do they stick to them rigidly—or treat them as "guidelines"?) Observe their use of language. (Do they bluntly say "No" to proposals they

consider unacceptable—or merely smile and say they'll "get back to you" and then not respond?)

**Use your "Body" to emulate others.** Seventy percent of communication is through body language. Practice mirroring the customs and gestures of people from other cultures.

For example, do they greet one another with a handshake, or with a kiss to both cheeks? Do men never shake women's hands, and vice versa? While chatting, are they "up close and personal," or do they stand several feet apart? How much—if any—eye contact do they make? Under what circumstances do they smile? Bow?

**Use your "Heart" to believe you can learn about others.** Embrace the notion that you are capable of understanding people from other cultures. In the face of obstacles, setbacks, or outright failure, strive with even greater rigor to familiarize yourself with others' cultures and follow their norms when you're in their territory.

Do you have the "head," "body," and "heart" to learn about and communicate with others?

## Concluding thoughts on cultural intelligence

Understanding a culture does not mean you must embrace all its beliefs and behaviors. Neither does it imply that you must change your values or indulge in a cultural practice that you disagree with. What it *does* mean is that you use your knowledge of others' culture to understand why they do business the way they do. This understanding can lead to more positive, productive relationships in the workplace and with your customers.

With the increased globalization of business—including offshoring, setting up operations in various countries, and establishing far-flung virtual teams—international cultural differences have presented managers with particularly daunting challenges. To successfully manage cultural diversity around the globe, managers must be especially savvy communicators.

## Activity: Assess your cultural intelligence

Strengthening your cultural intelligence (CI) may help you avoid business gaffes when working in different environments. Have you mastered the art of cross-cultural communication?

How comfortable are you interacting with other cultures?

Answer each of the following ten questions "yes" or "no." Record your answer to each question manually as you go.

1. Before I interact with people from a new culture, I ask myself what I hope to achieve.
2. If I encounter something unexpected while working in a new culture, I use this experience to figure out new ways to approach other cultures in the future.
3. I plan how I'm going to relate to people from a different culture before I meet them.



4. When I come into a new cultural situation, I often have an accurate sense of whether something is going well or something is wrong.
5. It's easy for me to change my body language (for example, eye contact or posture) to suit people from a different culture.
6. I can alter my facial expression when a cultural encounter requires it.
7. I can modify my speech style (for example, accent or tone) to suit people from a different culture.
8. I act in the way that is most natural and consistent with my true personality during cross-cultural interactions.
9. I probably communicate well with people of different cultures.
10. It seems easy to befriend people whose cultural backgrounds are different from mine.
11. I can adapt to the lifestyle of a different culture with relative ease.
12. When encountering a cultural situation that is unfamiliar, I am sure of myself.

Tally your score, giving yourself one point for each "yes" answer, and select it from the options below.

☐ 0-4

You may not have much experience with cross-cultural encounters, but that doesn't mean you lack potential. Embrace the idea that you can learn about and communicate with people of other cultures. Practice talking with people in your office or city who have cultural backgrounds that are different from your own. Take advantage of resources on cross-cultural communication, such as books, online programs, and CDs as well as opportunities for coaching or mentoring that may be available through your employer.

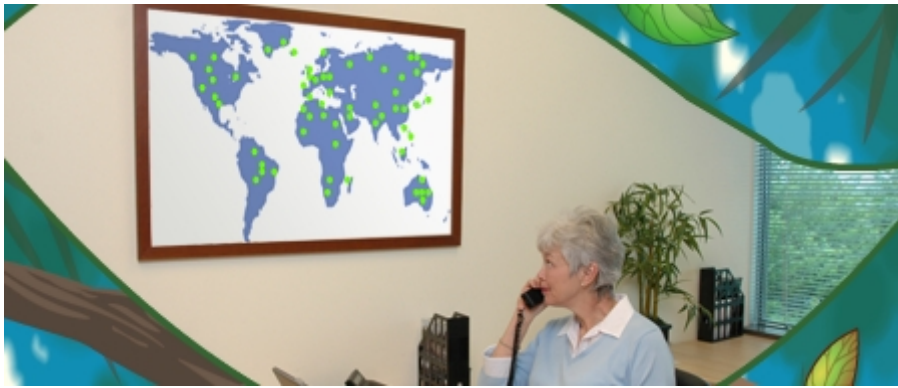
☐ 5-8

You demonstrate some confidence in your ability to learn about and communicate with people of other cultures. However, you still have room to improve your CI. You can continue to grow your cross-cultural communication skills by talking with people in your office or city who have different cultural backgrounds from your own. Also, take advantage of resources on cross-cultural communication, such as books, online programs, and CDs as well as opportunities for coaching or mentoring that may be available through your employer.

☐ 9-12

Whether through experience or natural aptitude, you appear to be an excellent cross-cultural communicator. You approach interactions with people of different cultures with awareness, confidence, and a high level of cultural sensitivity. Seek opportunities to mentor others who wish to develop their ability to learn about and communicate with people of other cultures.

## Operate globally



In today's business world, most large organizations operate globally. They:

- Sell their products and services to customers from various countries.
- Employ individuals from different nationalities.
- Use suppliers from around the world.
- Compete against rivals coming from many points on the globe.
- Forge joint-venture partnerships with companies in other countries.
- Assemble virtual teams comprising employees from far-flung locations.

If your company operates in any of these ways, you can expect to routinely encounter and communicate with people with national cultures different from your own. For example, you may be asked to:

- Form a virtual team made up of employees from different countries and time zones, and lead the team from your home office or an overseas location.
- Visit a customer in another country and negotiate an important deal.
- Meet with potential vendors from different countries to discuss their services and select the right supplier for your firm.
- Travel to another country and meet with representatives from a joint-venture partner to discuss progress on a major project.

In all of these scenarios, you can't assume that you'll interact and communicate with people from other cultures the same way you do at home. Indeed, if you expect individuals from other countries to negotiate, discuss business, and resolve problems exactly as you do, you risk committing communication gaffes that can sour your business relationships and hurt your company's—and your—performance.

## Key Idea: Avoid cross-cultural communication gaffes

### Key idea

Operating globally can benefit all the parties involved. But cross-border cultural differences can make communication difficult. How to avoid gaffes while communicating with people from other countries? The following ideas can help:

- **Sharpen your awareness.** Hone your awareness—and appreciation—of the vast differences in communication styles among national cultures by taking advantage of resources

provided by your company or online, such as books and articles on the subject as well as experts.

- **Use your "people skills."** Draw on your "people skills" by observing others and adapting to their communication styles. Keep your awareness of national culture differences in mind while interacting with others. However, don't overgeneralize by assuming that two people from the same culture communicate in identical ways. Look for each person's individual style as well.
- **Get educated.** Take advantage of any cross-cultural training and coaching provided by your company. If your organization doesn't provide such resources, consider obtaining them yourself through online programs or courses offered by local colleges and continuing education programs.
- **Find "cultural mentors."** Identify peer managers in your firm who you see as particularly skilled at cross-border communication. Ask them what they do to enhance their ability to communicate with people from other nations. Then practice applying their methods to your own cross-border dealings.

How to avoid gaffes while communicating with people from other countries? Here are some ideas that can help.

## Confusion about language

Often, people from different countries use English to discuss business together. But because comprehension of English can vary greatly, misunderstandings may occur.

For example, Larry leads a virtual team charged with designing brochures for new products. One morning, he e-mails Maya, a newly hired freelance graphic artist based overseas. In his e-mail, he asks her when she'll have the mock-up ready to circulate among the team members.

By "mock-up," Larry is referring to a rough draft of the brochure, showing placement of text and photos. Maya understands "mock-up" to mean a more finished version of the brochure. So, she tells him she'll have it ready in two weeks. Larry thinks to himself, *What? Two weeks to do a mock-up?* Because Larry doesn't realize that he and Maya are defining "mock-up" differently, he becomes skeptical of Maya's abilities and starts micromanaging her. Eventually, their relationship sours, corroding the team's morale and productivity.

## Special challenges of nonverbal communication

People from different countries use nonverbal signals—including gestures, silence, touch, eye contact, and facial expressions—to mean different things. If you don't understand the different meanings assigned to such signals, you may misread them in another person.

For instance, suppose you've been assigned to lead a project team for several months in another country where your company has set up a satellite office. Soon after you arrive at the new location, you meet with each team member individually to introduce yourself and discuss project plans. During these meetings, you notice that a number of the team members make very little eye contact with you. You don't realize that, in their country, looking an authority figure in the eye signifies lack of respect. So, you interpret their behavior incorrectly—

concluding that they're trying to conceal something from you. The project starts off unnecessarily on a note of mistrust.

## The art of negotiation



Negotiation styles vary widely across cultures. In some countries, negotiators open talks by emphasizing the negative aspects of the bargaining so far; in others, the positive. Some believe that withholding information is power. Some consider it rude to say "No" outright. People may also have very different preferences for how to set the pace of discussions during a negotiation.

To illustrate, Reed, a manager for a company based in Los Angeles, meets with Khoa, a manager at a Hanoi-based supplier, to negotiate a potential contract. For Reed, negotiation is about pushing through a deal—period. When Reed decides that the discussion isn't moving forward as quickly as he thinks it should, he presents increasingly forceful arguments. Khoa, who typically first builds a relationship with his negotiation counterpart and then slowly enters into the bargaining, interprets Reed's behavior as disrespect. Their negotiation fizzles, and what could have been a mutually beneficial deal never comes to pass.

## Misunderstandings about forms of agreement

What constitutes an agreement hinges tightly on cultural norms. For some cultures, a verbal agreement is sufficient for both parties to move ahead with implementing a deal. In others, bargainers require formal legal documents to consider an agreement sealed. Lack of understanding of these different norms can lead to painful misunderstandings and lost business.

Consider this example: you work for a small start-up that's developing a new technology. You've met with several engineers and marketers from TechInc., a potential customer from another country, to gauge TechInc.'s interest in your product. At each meeting and during each phone call, you hear comments from the TechInc. representatives such as, "We're definitely on board, and we'll want to get the work done as quickly as possible. We'll get the purchase order to you by the end of next week."

You assume that this verbal agreement means you'll actually receive the purchase order by the designated date. Mindful of TechInc.'s urgency about having the order filled, you contact a long-time supplier that sells the parts needed to fill the order, and you purchase the parts. But when the following week ends, you still haven't received the official order from TechInc. You phone Marlon, your contact from TechInc., to find out what's going on. "Oh," he says. "Well, we need to have more internal discussion about whether we can move forward with this project."

We'll send you the order if we want to proceed." You're forced to cancel the order you placed with the parts supplier—setting the stage for mistrust in a previously positive relationship.

Misunderstandings are all too common when managers are communicating internationally. However, by employing strategies to avoid cross-cultural gaffes and understanding the four areas where misunderstandings are most likely to occur (language, nonverbal communication, negotiation, and forms of agreement), you can improve the odds of success in your international business dealings.

## Overview

This section provides interactive exercises so you can practice what you've learned. These exercises are self-checks only; your answers will not be used to evaluate your performance in the topic.

### Scenario

Assume the role of a manager in a fictional situation and explore different outcomes based on your choices (5-10 minutes).

### Check Your Knowledge

Assess your understanding of key points by completing a 10-question quiz (10 minutes).

## Scenario: Part 1

### Part 1

Meet Karen. She heads a product development group in the food division of Langston Industries. This large consumer-goods company, headquartered in California, sells its products in all regions of the United States. Langston is recognized in the industry for its success at measuring—and rewarding—performance on the unit, team, and individual level.

Last week, Karen's boss announced a new strategic initiative for the division: develop easy-to-prepare food products that will appeal to targeted ethnic communities in the United States. Karen knows she'll need to count on her direct reports to think up creative offerings that appeal to these new markets. And she knows that a diverse team comes up with more fresh ideas than a homogenous one.

While Karen's team is primarily white, it currently represents a mix of ages, genders, work and learning styles, and religious beliefs. But she's wondering how she can best strengthen diversity in her team to meet the company's new goals.

What would be the *best* way for Karen to strengthen diversity in her team?

- Encourage her employees to learn about the ethnic communities that Langston intends to serve by visiting their grocery stores, restaurants, and other gathering places. By learning about each

community's unique preferences, they'll generate good ideas for new products.

**Not the best choice.**

While Karen's subordinates would be wise to educate themselves on the markets they'll be serving, improving the team's ethnic diversity would better help Karen achieve her goals. In companies serving culturally diverse consumer markets, team members with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds can draw from firsthand familiarity with their own cultures to generate product ideas. To enhance her team's cultural diversity, Karen would do well to recruit some new members who come from the same ethnic backgrounds as Langston's target markets—and have experience working in those markets.

- Karen should travel to several countries in which Langston's new target markets originated—for example, Japan, India, and Mexico. By visiting these countries, Karen can directly observe cultural preferences and share her knowledge with her team.

**Not the best choice.**

Though it would be valuable for Karen to experience new cultures through travel, the second- and third-generation ethnic communities that Langston wants to serve in the United States may have very different tastes from those in Japan, India, and Mexico. For this reason, she should consider improving her team's cultural diversity. In companies serving culturally diverse consumer markets, team members with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds can draw from firsthand familiarity with their own cultures to generate product ideas. To enhance her team's cultural diversity, Karen would do well to recruit some new members who come from the same ethnic backgrounds as Langston's target markets—and have experience working in those markets.

- Find out how members of Langston's target ethnic groups get information. Then advertise job openings through those media in the hope of recruiting more culturally diverse team members.

**Correct choice.**

In companies serving culturally diverse consumer markets, team members with different ethnic backgrounds can draw upon firsthand familiarity with their own cultures to generate appealing new product ideas. Since Karen's team doesn't exhibit much ethnic variety, she would do well to recruit some new members who come from the same cultural backgrounds as Langston's target markets and who have experience working in such markets. She may need to find out how people from her target ethnic groups get information (e.g., through TV, radio, and newspapers) and then advertise job openings through those media. She should



also provide her current team members with training on the new ethnic markets Langston seeks to serve.

## Scenario: Part 2

### Part 2

Within several months, Karen has added three new members to her team. They're experienced in working in Langston's target markets, and interested in continuing that work. Hector, whose parents immigrated to the United States from Mexico, is hired as a product developer. Min Cho, a Korean-American woman, and Vinod, a third-generation Indian, are new project team leaders.

Karen has always held a weekly meeting in which her project team leaders discuss progress on their work. During these meetings, she asks each leader to "tell me what you, personally, have accomplished this week." Recently, Karen begins noticing something troubling: Min provides vague answers and has difficulty finding anything positive to report about her accomplishments.

Unable to get the information she needs from Min about her contributions, Karen worries that Min is not a good fit for Langston. Though Min had seemed reserved during the interview, her references had applauded her track record as a team leader. Does Min simply lack confidence? Karen wonders what to do.

What should Karen do about Min?

- Build Min's confidence by praising her unique skills during staff meetings and other team events.

#### Not the best choice.

Though Min's behavior may stem from a lack of confidence, Karen shouldn't assume that this is the case. Nor should she assume that she would value public praise. Often, a person's behavior during business meetings and discussions about individual accomplishments is influenced by his or her cultural background. For example, many Asian cultures are collectivist: they frown on people who emphasize their personal achievements over their group's accomplishments. Praising Min publicly might make her even more uncomfortable than she already is.

- Help Min strengthen her skills by providing her with a coach or mentor who can teach her to feel more comfortable describing her individual accomplishments during weekly project meetings.

#### Correct choice.

Min's reluctance to express her personal achievements may stem from a collectivist cultural background that discourages "bragging" or calling attention to oneself. However, she is

operating in an organization that evaluates and rewards employees based in part on their individual performance. In addition, Karen needs to know what she has accomplished on her project, in order to assess progress. Thus, to do well at Langston, Min will need to learn how to describe her personal on-the-job achievements in more specific terms.

- Give Min several months to adjust to Langston's organizational culture.

### Not the best choice.

Min's behavior during the meetings may be strongly influenced by her cultural background; thus giving her time to adjust to Langston's culture may not be Karen's best move. Different cultures have different beliefs about what constitutes appropriate behavior on the job. Like some Asians, Min may believe that emphasizing one's individual accomplishments is inappropriate. However, she is operating in an organization that evaluates and rewards employees based in part on their individual performance. In addition, Karen needs to know what she has accomplished on her project, in order to assess progress. Thus, to do well at Langston, Min will need to learn how to describe her personal on-the-job achievements in more specific terms. Training, coaching, or mentoring might help her enhance this ability.

## Scenario: Part 3

### Part 3

Karen considers how Min's culture has influenced her discomfort with emphasizing individual achievements on the job. She then invites Min to work with a coach who helps her feel more comfortable discussing her personal on-the-job accomplishments. Soon Karen begins getting the information she needs to assess progress on Min's project as well as evaluate and reward her individual performance.

It's one year later. Karen meets with Hector to conduct his annual performance appraisal. Hector has been delivering excellent performance on the job and expresses enthusiasm about Langston. Hector also reminds Karen that he has recently finished a graduate degree in business administration, and is eager to apply some of his new learning on the job. During the week after the meeting, Karen begins thinking about how she might make the best use of Hector's skills, enthusiasm, and knowledge.

How would you advise Karen to make the best use of Hector's talents?

- Invite Hector to mentor newly hired Hispanics at Langston. Also consider leveraging Hector's experience with Hispanic markets by

promoting him to lead the project team that's developing products for Hispanic communities.

### Not the best choice.

By offering Hector new job responsibilities that center only on Hispanic issues, Karen is taking a "differentiation" approach to diversity in her team. While this approach has advantages, it also risks making Hector feel pigeonholed or exploited as a "token." Though Hector may be able to make important contributions in these niche assignments, he may also want to—and be well qualified to—contribute to Langston's mainstream business. Excluding Hector from these broader opportunities could cause him to conclude that he has little opportunity for advancement at Langston. And that could prompt him to look for work elsewhere.

- Assign Hector to lead a special task force charged with addressing product-packaging challenges Langston has encountered in serving both mainstream and niche markets.

### Correct choice.

By inviting Hector to take on broader challenges while continuing to serve the niche Hispanic market, Karen is taking an "integration" approach to diversity on her team. This approach encourages talented employees to use their differences to improve mainstream processes and operations in the organization, rather than remaining isolated in niche ventures.

- Decide that Hector's talents should now be focused exclusively on the company's mainstream operations. Steer Hector away from responsibilities centered on serving only Langston's Hispanic markets.

### Not the best choice.

This decision represents an "assimilation" approach to diversity. While this approach has advantages, it can also encourage direct reports to downplay differences among themselves. The resulting uniform behavior can prevent a company from benefiting from employees' varied backgrounds. Karen would be wiser to take an "integration" approach: giving Hector opportunities to improve the way the company does business in general (including defining new markets and improving key processes) while also continuing to serve new niche markets.

## Scenario: Conclusion

### Conclusion

A week after Hector's performance appraisal, Karen invites him to lead the special task force that will address product-packaging challenges Langston has encountered in serving mainstream and niche markets. Hector is enthusiastic about the opportunity, and manages to fit the work into his existing responsibilities.

As leader of the task force, Hector comes up with ideas for printing food-preparation instructions and recipes in several different languages (French, Spanish, English, and Japanese) on packaging for products sold to multiple markets. Thanks to his ideas, Langston launches new, easy-to-use food offerings that appeal to a broad range of consumers. The division's revenues increase.

Looking back on the past year, Karen acknowledges to herself that simply hiring diverse new team members wasn't enough for her to maximize the value that her different employees brought to the table. She also had to master new ways of managing her diverse group, as well as carefully think through how their varied backgrounds and skills might best support the company's niche and mainstream goals.

Though she knows she's still learning about how to manage a diverse workforce, she feels confident that she has taken several steps in the right direction.

## Activity: Check Your Knowledge: Question 1

What is diversity in an organization?

- Differences among employees in a workplace

**Correct choice.**

Differences among employees can include race, gender, ethnic background, physical and cognitive abilities, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, learning and work styles, body type, and work/life commitments. Differences can also be cultural—such as ways of greeting new business associates, negotiating, and resolving conflicts that are unique to each country, region within a country, organization, or group within an organization.

- Unit-level initiatives intended to improve job opportunities for women and people of color

**Not the best choice.**

Initiatives intended to improve job opportunities for women and people of color are not diversity. Instead, diversity is another word for differences among people. In an organizational setting, a diverse workforce comprises employees of various races, genders, ethnic backgrounds, physical and cognitive abilities, sexual orientations, religious beliefs, learning and work styles, body type, and work/life commitments. Differences can also be cultural—such as ways of greeting new business associates, negotiating, and resolving conflicts that are unique to each country, each region within a country, an organization, and each group within an organization.

- Company-level policies governing the number of minority members that a company must employ to meet legal requirements

**Not the best choice.**

Policies governing the number of minority members that a company must employ to meet legal requirements is not diversity. Instead, diversity is another word for differences between people. In an organizational setting, a diverse workforce comprises employees of various races, genders, ethnic backgrounds, physical and cognitive abilities, sexual orientations, religious beliefs, learning and work styles, body type, and work/life commitments. Differences can also be cultural—such as ways of greeting new business associates, negotiating, and resolving conflicts that are unique to each country, each region within a country, an organization, and each group within an organization.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 2

Which of the following best defines *stereotypes*?

- Behavior intended to denigrate another person based on his or her race, gender, or other distinguishing characteristic

**Not the best choice.**

Stereotypes are cognitive phenomena, not behaviors. Specifically, stereotypes are conventional, formulaic, and oversimplified conceptions, opinions, or images of particular groups. Stereotypes can be positive or negative; for example, "Asians are smart and hardworking," "Californians are laid-back when it comes to business," "Men love sports," "Germans are efficient," and "Americans are pushy negotiators." Assumptions that all members of a particular group are the same can have damaging consequences in the workplace if these assumptions cause managers to deprive employees of equal opportunities.

- Conventional, formulaic, and oversimplified conceptions, opinions, or images of particular groups

**Correct choice.**

Stereotypes can be positive or negative; for example, "Asians are smart and hardworking," "Californians are laid-back when it comes to business," "Men love sports," "Germans are efficient," and "Americans are pushy negotiators." Assumptions that all members of a particular group are the same can have damaging consequences in the workplace if these assumptions cause managers to deprive employees of equal opportunities.

- An adverse judgment or opinion formed beforehand or without knowledge or examination of the facts

**Not the best choice.**

This is the definition of prejudice, not stereotypes. Stereotypes are conventional, formulaic, and oversimplified conceptions, opinions, or images of particular groups. Stereotypes can be positive or negative; for example, "Asians are smart and hardworking," "Californians are laid-back when it comes to business," "Men love sports," "Germans are efficient," and "Americans are pushy negotiators." Assumptions that all members of a particular group are the same can have damaging consequences in the workplace if these assumptions cause managers to deprive employees of equal opportunities.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 3

Jack, a newly hired African American marketing vice president, meets his company's executive team for the first time, all of whom are white. Instead of expressing interest in Jack's marketing expertise, the executives ask if he'd like to head up the firm's new diversity committee. What harmful message have the executives *most* likely conveyed to Jack?

- They're concerned that he can't succeed in the marketing job.

**Not the best choice.**

By ignoring Jack's marketing expertise and inviting him to head up the diversity committee, the white executives have not necessarily communicated concern that Jack can't succeed in his new role. Instead, they most likely have made Jack feel that they can't see past his skin color. Jack may conclude that he's being exploited as a token, or will be pigeonholed into roles that relate only to race. African Americans subjected to this behavior may wonder whether their white supervisors and peers value their business expertise. The resulting mistrust may cause them to leave the company in search of more welcoming environments.

- They don't respect the skills he brings to his new role.

**Not the best choice.**

By ignoring Jack's marketing expertise and inviting him to head up the diversity committee, the white executives have not necessarily communicated lack of respect for the skills he brings to his new role. Instead, they most likely have made Jack feel that they can't see past his skin color. Jack may conclude that he's being exploited as a token, or will be pigeonholed into roles that relate only to race. African Americans subjected to this behavior may wonder whether their white supervisors and peers value their business expertise. The resulting mistrust may cause them to leave the company in search of more welcoming environments.

- They view him as a token.

**Correct choice.**

By ignoring Jack's marketing expertise and inviting him to head up the diversity committee, the white executives most likely have made Jack feel that they can't see past his skin color. Jack may conclude that he's being exploited as a token, or will be pigeonholed into roles that relate only to race. African Americans subjected to this behavior may wonder whether their white supervisors and peers value their business expertise. The resulting mistrust may cause them to leave the company in search of more welcoming environments.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 4

Which of the following is the best way to manage a diverse workforce?

- Hire diverse employees, then ask them to adhere to uniform codes of conduct defining how to look, act, and get ahead—to send the message that "we're all the same"



**Not the best choice.**

By hiring diverse employees and then asking them to adhere to uniform codes of conduct defining how to look, act, and get ahead, managers implement an "assimilation" approach to diversity. Assimilation encourages everyone to adhere to universal codes of conduct defining how to look, act, and get ahead. Employees downplay their differences, preventing the organization from benefiting from their unique perspectives.

- Identify employees' diverse experiences and perspectives, and incorporate them into the way the company does business—to change things for the better

**Correct choice.**

By incorporating employees' diverse experiences and perspectives into the way the company does business, managers implement an "inclusion" approach to diversity. Inclusion transcends two flawed, extreme approaches to managing diversity: assimilation and differentiation. Assimilation encourages everyone to adhere to universal codes of conduct defining how to look, act, and get ahead. Employees downplay their differences, preventing the organization from benefiting from their unique perspectives. Differentiation assigns diverse employees to niche customer segments, which can make some people feel they're being pigeonholed or exploited as tokens.

- Celebrate differences by assigning diverse employees to niche customer segments distinguished by gender, race, age, ethnicity, and other defining characteristics

**Not the best choice.**

By assigning diverse employees to niche customer segments distinguished by gender, race, age, ethnicity, and other defining characteristics, managers implement a "differentiation" approach to diversity. Differentiation can make some people feel they're being pigeonholed or exploited as tokens. They may conclude that they have limited opportunities to advance in the organization or to contribute to the company's mainstream business activities—and leave in search of greater opportunity elsewhere.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 5

You work in a company located in a small city where the population is mostly white. Likewise, your firm's workforce predominantly comprises white males in their 40s. You're considering assembling a new, diverse team to develop ideas for innovative products for your firm. Which of the following diversity strategies would you use?

- Assemble a team representing ethnicities and age groups that differ from white men in their 40s

**Not the best choice.**

Omitting white males in their 40s from your new team would be just as exclusionary as leaving out young black women or representatives from any other minority groups. Moreover, like any other demographic category, 45-year-old white males constitute a potentially profitable market. Before implementing any diversity initiative, ask yourself: "Will this initiative contribute to

everyone's success on my team? Or will it produce an advantage for only one or certain groups?" The most valuable diversity initiatives benefit *everyone*.

- Assemble a team populated primarily by women in their 40s

**Not the best choice.**

Developing a team consisting mostly of women in their 40s would not constitute an ideal diversity strategy. Omitting men—as well as women of other ages—would be just as exclusionary as leaving out representatives from minority groups. Before implementing any diversity initiative, ask yourself: "Will this initiative contribute to everyone's success on my team? Or will it produce an advantage for only one or certain groups?" The most valuable diversity initiatives benefit *everyone*.

- Assemble a team containing members from a broad range of ethnicities, ages, genders, and national origin, including 45-year-old white males

**Correct choice.**

The best diversity initiatives encompass *all* employees—not just members of minority groups. Before implementing any diversity initiative, it's important to ask yourself: "Will this initiative contribute to everyone's success on my team? Or will it produce an advantage for only one or certain groups?" The most valuable diversity initiatives benefit *everyone*.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 6

You want to hire more diverse employees from your company's area. Which of the following strategies would *best* help you achieve this goal?

- Ask employee affinity groups to "sell" potential new hires on the advantages of working for your organization

**Correct choice.**

Employee affinity groups can not only help you reach qualified diverse job candidates, but may also persuade them to accept an offer. For example, a "people of color" group could talk with candidates as well as community and educational organizations about your company, what it's like to work there, and how they've advanced in the firm. These groups help support the message to candidates: "We value diversity here."

- Post job advertisements in the most widely read newspapers in the region to boost your chances of reaching diverse candidates

**Not the best choice.**

Different ethnic groups use different media to gather information about career and other opportunities. You can't assume that members of your targeted groups rely primarily on the most widely read mainstream newspapers for information. Instead, find out which media your target candidate group uses most—for example, ethnic radio stations, TV stations, or Web sites; or ethnic newspapers, magazines, or trade journals. Advertise job openings in your targeted group's chosen media to boost your chances of reaching candidates.

- [Attend career-day activities sponsored by the nearest colleges and universities in your area](#)

**Not the best choice.**

Though attending career-day activities sponsored by nearby colleges may yield you some diverse candidates, you would probably reach more candidates by attending such activities at educational institutions with a high ratio of women, people of color, and other diverse groups.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 7

Marta has recruited several highly qualified diverse candidates into her team and wants to ensure that they remain with her company. Which of the following strategies would *best* help her retain valued diverse employees?

- [On a quarterly basis, reward excellent performance with a weekend getaway for two at a luxurious retreat](#)

**Not the best choice.**

Though a weekend getaway for two may be well intended, it doesn't respect the differences among Marta's staff. For example, a valued employee who has several children may be reluctant to spend a weekend away from them as well as pay for a babysitter. Instead, Marta should devise incentives that send the message that she values diversity in her group and that would be appreciated by all of her subordinates.

- [Apply equal criteria for high performance when conducting employees' regularly scheduled performance appraisals](#)

**Not the best choice.**

Marta should customize definitions of high performance based on the different work arrangements of her employees. For instance, suppose a subordinate has negotiated a reduced workweek (with corresponding reduction in pay) to spend more time on nonwork commitments. Marta should not expect this employee to produce as much work in a 32-hour week as a 40-hour-a-week employee in the same job. Instead, she should judge the part-time employee's performance based on how well she met the goals, deadlines, and quality requirements defined for her job.

- [Offer flextime and telecommuting for subordinates who have job responsibilities that can be carried out at any time and from any location](#)

**Correct choice.**

Tailoring work/life programs to employees' diverse needs and circumstances can help Marta retain talent. For example, for employees who are shouldering responsibility for their immediate *and* extended family, flextime and telecommuting can save them from burnout—and win their loyalty to Marta's company.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 8

Which of the following statements about culture is true?

- Culture determines a person's beliefs, behaviors, and values.

**Correct choice.**

A person's culture strongly influences his or her beliefs about how the world works and how people should interact; behaviors including gestures, use of eye contact, facial expressions, and gift-giving rituals; and values—what the person considers most important—such as family or personal life, career, religious identity, and social responsibility.

- Culture exists primarily at the national level.

**Not the best choice.**

Culture can exist not only at a national level but also a regional, organizational, and group level. For example, people living and working in a rural region within a country may have very different beliefs, values, and behaviors from those living and working within an urban center in that same country. Likewise, people working in a large consumer-goods corporation may have a very different culture from those working in a small, not-for-profit entity. And people working in a marketing department may do things differently than those working in the research and development group.

- Culture primarily affects how people conduct themselves during business negotiations.

**Not the best choice.**

Though culture affects how people negotiate, it also influences a wide range of other business activities—including how people build working relationships, make decisions, greet one another, entertain business partners and customers, deliver presentations, and set business priorities.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 9

Henry is about to travel abroad for an important negotiation. He wants to strengthen his cultural intelligence to boost his chances of success during the negotiation. Which of the following would *best* help him increase his CI?

- Find out what people in the country he'll be visiting believe about life and work in general, then strive to adopt those beliefs himself.

**Not the best choice.**

Understanding another culture doesn't mean you must embrace all its beliefs and behaviors. It also doesn't mean you have to change your values or indulge in cultural practices that are unacceptable to you. It *does* mean using your knowledge of other cultures to understand why members of those cultures see things the way they do. This understanding can help you cultivate more positive, productive relationships with people from other cultures.

- Research cultural rules of the other country ahead of time and prepare himself to follow those rules when he meets with his negotiation counterparts.

**Correct choice.**

By consulting books, articles, videos, DVDs, and other information sources before his trip, Henry could learn about the other country's cultural rules regarding greeting, entertaining, and negotiating. He could also get help from a coach specializing in cultural diversity, as well as foster relationships with people from the other country if possible. By learning about the other country's cultural rules, he can emulate them when meeting with his negotiation counterparts—thus demonstrating his esteem for them and for how they conduct business in their country. Such demonstrations encourage trust and openness—essential ingredients in any business interaction.

- Develop a plan for how to observe his counterparts' behaviors during his first few encounters with them, and emulate those behaviors during later stages in the negotiation.

**Not the best choice.**

Though observing others' behaviors and emulating them during a negotiation can be useful, Henry shouldn't rely solely on this strategy to strengthen his cultural intelligence. He should also research the other country's culture *before* his trip. That way, he can familiarize himself with his counterparts' cultural "rules" ahead of time and demonstrate respect for those rules immediately upon meeting representatives from the other negotiating team. Such demonstrations encourage trust and openness—essential ingredients in any business interaction.

## Check Your Knowledge: Question 10

Alyssa is preparing to take a year-long overseas assignment for her company. She knows that cross-cultural miscommunication typically occurs in four areas. In addition to nonverbal communication, negotiation, and beliefs about what constitutes agreement on a business deal, what other key area should Alyssa watch for possible miscommunication once she begins her assignment?

- Confusion about language

**Correct choice.**

Often, people from different countries use English to discuss business together. But because comprehension of English can vary, misunderstandings of words and expressions may occur.

- Misunderstandings about gift-giving practices

**Not the best choice.**

The fourth area in which cross-cultural miscommunication typically occurs is confusion about language, not misunderstandings about gift-giving practices. Specifically, people from different countries often use English to discuss business together. But because comprehension of English can vary, misunderstandings of words and expressions may occur.

- Mistakes over use of people's surnames

## Not the best choice.

The fourth area in which cross-cultural miscommunication typically occurs is confusion about language, not mistakes over use of people's surnames. Specifically, people from different countries often use English to discuss business together. But because comprehension of English can vary, misunderstandings of words and expressions may occur.

## Check Your Knowledge: Results

# Your score:

## Steps for distinguishing between performance- and diversity-related problems

### 1. Identify tension you're experiencing.

For example, Marc is concerned because James, an African American direct report, has recently delivered lower-than-usual performance levels on the job. Yet Marc is reluctant to give James critical feedback, for fear James will view him as racist.

### 2. Define the job requirements of the person(s) in question.

For instance, the requirements of James's sales job include acquiring a specific number of new accounts per quarter.

### 3. Ask whether the person(s) can fulfill the job requirements you've identified.

In James's previous job, with a different employer, he had similar job requirements, which he met or exceeded on a regular basis. His performance in this previous role was a major reason that Marc decided to hire James. Clearly, James is capable of fulfilling the job requirements.

### 4. Separate facts from opinions about the problem at hand.

Marc identifies the following facts: James has met his job requirement during three of the past four quarters and exceeded those requirements during the first quarter. Marc also identifies an opinion: he has assumed that James's recent downturn in performance will continue or worsen.

### 5. Consider whether there are any biases affecting views of the problem.

Marc finds himself recalling a time several years ago, when he had hired an African American account manager who ultimately could not fulfill the requirements of the job in a consistent way. He realizes that that earlier experience is causing him to make assumptions about James's capabilities on the job—that he is overgeneralizing about James based on another experience.

### 6. Identify actions needed to correct the situation.

Marc decides to talk with James about what has caused the recent downturn in his performance. Marc thinks it makes sense to offer James coaching to address the problem.



## **7. Implement the actions you've identified.**

By talking with James, Marc learns that a recent illness in the family has made it more difficult for James to devote as much energy to his job as he usually does. Marc discovers that James' elderly mother, who lives with him, has been diagnosed with an aggressive terminal illness. James now shares responsibility for her hospice care.

While James used to handle e-mail and phone communications with customers during off-hours at his home office, he has been unable to do so for the last few months.

Marc realizes that James's situation has nothing to do with his on-the-job abilities, and that the current dip in James's performance will likely prove temporary. He offers James his compassion and support and decides that no corrective action is necessary.

Adapted from Fields Associates, Inc. "Handling Differences Using the Fields Associates JOB-IT Model," 2006.

## **Steps for creating a diversity recruitment plan**

### **1. Analyze the demographics of the diversity community.**

Find out which geographic areas contain the highest concentrations of the diverse groups you want to recruit.

### **2. Research the competitive landscape.**

Analyze what rival organizations are doing to recruit diverse talent and to position themselves as an employer of choice. Consider whether some of their recruitment strategies are worth adopting, and how you might improve on them to compete more effectively for talent.

### **3. Evaluate the media habits of diverse candidates.**

Learn how members of different groups gather information and news. Examples include ethnic radio stations, TV programs, and newspapers; niche Web sites; ethnic trade journals and publications; and job boards' diversity sites.

### **4. Craft job advertisements that improve on competing organizations' recruitment efforts.**

Complement your company's brand with a compelling message about how your organization values diversity and offers valuable opportunities for diverse candidates. Make sure your message about diversity is communicated just as clearly through ethnic media as it is through mainstream media. For example, if a job posting in a mainstream newspaper is larger and more eye-catching than one in an ethnic newspaper, ethnic readers will be skeptical about your commitment to hiring diverse candidates.

### **5. Purchase targeted media for your job advertisements based on your analysis of diverse candidates' media habits.**

### **6. Leverage community and corporate outreach opportunities.**

Join forces with organizations that service the social, civic, religious, and educational needs of the diverse groups you're seeking to recruit from. These opportunities may include sponsorships, celebrations, and special events attended by your targeted populations.

**7. Once you've identified valued candidates, "sell" your company's commitment to diversity.**

Tout your organization's progress in hiring for diversity. Also emphasize the advantages of working for your organization—including special assignments that enable employees to strengthen and broaden their skills, as well as any programs designed to improve work/life balance.

**8. Augment job advertisements with rewards for members of your team who find qualified diverse job candidates and educate these candidates on the advantages of working for your organization.**

## Steps for resolving diversity-related conflicts

**1. Notice that diversity-related tension has arisen.**

Do you feel that someone you work with has shown prejudice toward you? Or has someone accused you of treating him or her in a prejudicial way? Identify where the tension or conflict is coming from.

**2. Reflect on your higher-level goals.**

Do you care most about being proved "innocent" of prejudice? About being proved "right" that you were indeed mistreated? Identify some higher-level professional goals that are more important to you than being proven innocent or right.

**3. Connect with the other person.** Ask questions to better understand his or her behavior and attitudes. Then share your own perspective.

**4. Question your assumptions about the situation.**

Ask yourself how your desire to be proven right about a perceived offense, or innocent of offending someone else, might have distorted your view of the situation.

For example, if an employee from a minority group complained about something you said during his performance appraisal, did you conclude that he views you as racist and become defensive? What data did you use to arrive at your conclusion? Might your conclusion be incorrect? Determine how you might check the accuracy of your interpretation.

**5. Shift your mind-set to open yourself to change.**

Identify changes you could make to improve your workplace relationship with the other person, then implement those changes.

For example, suppose you discover that an employee's curt behavior stems not from diversity-related tension with you, but from her worries about her increasing workload. In this case, perhaps you could coach her to help her improve her ability to delegate.

## Steps for strengthening your cultural intelligence

## 1. Assess your current level of cultural intelligence.

Identify your strengths and weaknesses in order to establish a starting point for subsequent development efforts. A 360-degree feedback assessment of your past behavior in actual intercultural situations can help you identify strengths and weaknesses. You can also conduct a self-assessment based on your own awareness of your strengths and weaknesses.

## 2. Select training that focuses on your weaknesses.

## 3. Apply the training you've selected.

## 4. Organize your personal resources to support your chosen development approach.

For instance, if you're having difficulty coming up with extra time to take a needed class, consider how you might lighten your workload temporarily. Perhaps you could delegate some tasks or ask a peer manager to lend you one of her employees for a few hours each week to handle overflow.

## 5. Enter the cultural setting you need to master.

## 6. Reevaluate the effectiveness of your newly developed skills by obtaining feedback from colleagues on how you handled the encounter in the new cultural setting.

## 7. Decide whether you need additional training to further strengthen your cultural intelligence.

## Tips for creating an inclusive workplace environment

- Identify and challenge any assumptions you have about people from certain groups and their work abilities or attitudes. Inaccurate assumptions—stereotypes and prejudice—will negatively affect the way you interact with these individuals.
- Communicate high expectations of performance for all workers. Never hesitate to address an employee's lagging performance because you fear being seen as prejudiced.
- Soon after hiring diverse employees, find out whether they will need some reasonable and fair accommodation. For example, do they have religious holidays and practices that require accommodations at certain times during the year?
- In providing examples to explain work assignments and concepts, draw from a variety of cultural reference points, not just your own experiences.
- Spend time getting to know everyone on your staff. Let them know that you care about them as human beings, not just as workers.
- Avoid telling jokes or making comments that reinforce stereotypes, and discourage others on your team from telling such jokes.

*Adapted from Dr. Richard Fields, "How Managers Can Enhance Their Effectiveness by Creating and Sustaining an Inclusive Workplace Environment."*

## Tips for recruiting diverse employees

- Ask multicultural contacts with whom you regularly interact to recommend candidates.
- Tap into diversity-focused community events. For example, see if your company would be interested in serving as a sponsor for a local event that will likely be attended by members of diverse groups you wish to attract.
- Attend special interest conferences and job fairs held by groups representing professionals of color, such as the National Black MBA Association.

- Use a wide range of multicultural marketing and recruitment sources, including local agencies, state and federal agencies, and independent search firms that specialize in recruiting specific populations.
- Recruit from colleges and universities with a high ratio of women, people of color, and other diverse groups. Participate in career-day activities and multicultural initiatives at such schools.
- Visit multicultural-oriented Web sites and diversity focused e-zines used by groups you're interested in recruiting to learn more about their career interests and to post job advertisements.

*Adapted From Janine Fondon, "From Impression to Impact: Five Most Web-Inspiring Ways to Recruit and Retain Diverse Professionals and Wow Consumers and Communities of Color," Business World Index, December 6, 2006, UnityFirst.com.*

## Tips for maximizing the value of employee affinity groups

- Ask your human resources manager to consider creating employee affinity groups in your company. Define business priorities that such groups would support (for example, recruiting a more diverse workforce) and explain the importance of affinity groups for providing social support.
- Give HR ideas for establishing a consistent structure for all affinity groups. For example, the HR group could define the minimum number of meetings and broadly express expected outcomes.
- Point out to HR the value of requiring that all affinity group activities have a business outcome—for instance, professional development of members, recruitment of diverse job candidates, or marketing of your company's image to targeted consumers.
- Explain that human resources staff could work with each affinity group to determine metrics for assessing the value created by the group.

Adapted from "Powerful Partnerships: Maximizing Return on Investment with Affinity Groups," Diversity Trends LLC, 2001.

## Tips for showing respect for people from another culture

- Through books, coaches, articles, DVDs, Web sites, and online or in-class training programs, familiarize yourself with the customs of the other culture before meeting with people from that culture.
- If you're not sure about appropriate dress, choose a traditional business suit or other conservative, professional clothing.
- Show individuals from the other culture your interest in learning about their lives. Ask appropriate questions, and listen to the answers.
- Let the people you're meeting with set the pace for introducing, discussing, and negotiating business issues.
- Adopt more formal behavior than you usually would; it will convey respect.
- Mirror as many of the other person's customs as possible. For example, greet people from the other culture in their language and follow rules about gift-giving and entertaining.

## Worksheet for understanding interpersonal bias

<i>Worksheet for Understanding Interpersonal Bias</i>
<i>Use this tool to understand how being treated with prejudice feels and to appreciate the importance of discouraging prejudice and stereotyping in the workplace.</i>
<b>When you were shown prejudice:</b>
Describe a situation in which someone showed prejudice toward you at work in the space below.
How did the incident make you feel?
How did you respond?
How might you have responded differently?
<b>When you were prejudiced toward someone else:</b>
Describe a situation where you think that you may have treated someone else in the workplace with prejudice.
How do you think the situation made the other person feel?
If the situation negatively affected your relationship with the other person, what steps might you take to repair the damage?

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## Creating an inclusive environment self-assessment

<b>Creating an Inclusive Environment Self-Assessment</b>					
<p>Use this tool to assess your ability to create a workplace environment in which all of your employees feel included and able to contribute their best on the job. For each statement below, indicate on a scale of 1 to 5 how strongly you agree or disagree with the statement. A "1" means "strongly disagree; a "5" means "strongly agree."</p>					
Statement	Rating				
	Low 1	2	3	4	High 5
1. I listen to all of my employees' concerns.					
2. I invite all of my employees to meetings during which decisions will be made that affect them or their work.					
3. I inform all of my employees about issues affecting them or their work.					
4. I make everyone in my department feel welcome.					
5. I treat all of my direct reports in ways that enable them to do their best work.					
6. My subordinates create value for our organization by engaging their knowledge and experience toward innovating, solving problems, and serving the organization's mission.					
7. I encourage my employees to contribute their skills, abilities, and unique knowledge and experience to contribute to the success of our department as well as the company.					
8. I trust my employees.					
9. My direct reports trust one another.					
10. My subordinates feel that they can "be themselves" at work.					
11. I demonstrate my appreciation for, and actively seek out, my employees' perspectives on the projects and efforts we're working on in our department.					
12. My employees feel a sense of "belonging" in the department and feel some ownership of and investment in our efforts.					
13. I speak up when one or more of my employees are being excluded during discussions.					
14. When I disagree with a direct report, I ask for their thoughts and experiences and accept their frame or reference as true for them.					
15. With employees whose primary language is different from my own, I learn how to say a few words in their language.					
<b>Next Steps</b>					
For each statement where you rated your agreement as "1" or "2," list ideas for improving your ability in that area.					
Statement number:	Ideas for improving:				

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## Worksheet for creating a diversity profile



<i>Worksheet for Creating a Diversity Profile</i>	
<i>Use this worksheet to create a staff diversity profile. Under each category, write the number of employees who fit each description. After developing this profile, identify ways to maximize the diversity of your team.</i>	
<b>Part I: Developing Your Profile</b>	
Date of profile: _____	
Department or team: _____	
<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Mature workers (age 55+) _____	Male _____
Mid-age workers (age 37-55) _____	Female _____
Young workers (age 20-36) _____	Transgendered _____
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Physical/Cognitive Ability</b>
African-American _____ Asian Indian _____	Employees with a physical disability _____
Asian _____ Polynesian _____	Employees with a cognitive disability _____
Latino/Hispanic _____ White _____	
Two or more races _____ Native American _____	
<b>Personal Status</b>	<b>Sexual Identity (for employees who are open about their identity)</b>
Domestic partnered _____	Gay _____
Domestic partnered with dependent(s) _____	Lesbian _____
Married _____	Bisexual _____
Married with dependent(s) _____	
Single _____	
Single with dependent(s) _____	
<b>Education</b>	<b>Religious Affiliation (for employees who are open about their religious affiliation)</b>
Did not complete high school _____	Christian _____ Other _____
Completed high school _____	Jewish _____
Completed 2-year college _____	Muslim _____
Completed 4-year college _____	Hindu _____
Completed graduate degree _____	Buddhist _____
Completed doctorate _____	Agnostic/Atheist _____
<b>PART II: Maximizing Your Team's Diversity</b>	
Diversity challenges in my department:	Ideas for addressing those challenges:
Diversity strengths in my department:	Ideas for building on those strengths:

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## Recruitment interview checklist

<b>Recruitment Interview Checklist</b>	
<i>Use this checklist to ensure that you're prepared to answer important questions from diverse job candidates during the interviewing process. For each question below, fill in the answer if you know it. For questions whose answers you don't know, indicate how you will gather the information.</i>	
Date of interview:	
Name of interviewee:	
Interviewee's defining diversity characteristic (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, age, etc.):	
<b>Candidate's Questions</b>	<b>Your Responses</b>
1. "How many people like me do you have in this organization?"	
2. "How many of the people like me are in middle and senior management positions?"	
3. "How many of the people like me are in professional or technical positions?"	
4. "What are my chances for progressing/advancing my career in this organization?"	
5. "Do you have a formal mentoring program and/or career development programs for people like me and other diverse groups?"	
6. "What does this organization do in terms of community outreach efforts to partner with diverse groups?"	
7. "Do you have employee affinity groups that focus on the needs of people like me and other groups?"	
8. "Are managers in this organization trained to communicate and manage diverse employees?"	
9. "What initiatives, events, and programs has your organization participated in regarding diversity?"	
10. "Does the organization have formal diversity initiatives and programs in place?"	

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## Cultural intelligence self-assessment

<i>Cultural Intelligence Self-Assessment</i>		
<p>Use this tool to identify aspects of your cultural intelligence (CI) that would benefit from strengthening. For each statement below, check "Yes" if you agree; "No" if you disagree. Then read the ideas for strengthening any weak areas.</p>		
<b>CI GAINED THROUGH THOUGHT AND OBSERVATION</b>		
Statement	Yes	No
Before I interact with people from a new culture, I ask myself what I hope to achieve.		
If I encounter something unexpected while working in a new culture, I use this experience to figure out new ways to approach other cultures in the future.		
I plan how I'm going to relate to people from a different culture before I meet them.		
When I come into a new cultural situation, I can immediately sense whether something is going well or something is wrong.		
<p><b>Strengthening weak areas:</b> For any statements where you checked "No," list ideas for strengthening that ability. For example, suppose you tend not to plan how you're going to relate to people from a different culture before you meet them. In this case, you might consider working with a coach before your next cross-cultural meeting to familiarize yourself ahead of time with the other culture's business practices.</p>		
<b>CI GAINED THROUGH MOTIVATION AND BELIEF IN POSSIBILITY</b>		
Statement	Yes	No
I have confidence that I can deal well with people from a different culture.		
I am certain that I can befriend people whose cultural backgrounds are different from mine.		
I can adapt to the lifestyle of a different culture with relative ease.		
I am confident that I can deal with a cultural situation that's unfamiliar.		
<p><b>Strengthening weak areas:</b> For any statements where you checked "No," list ideas for strengthening that ability. For example, suppose you lack confidence in your ability to deal with an unfamiliar cultural situation. In this case, you may be able to boost your confidence by talking with colleagues who had felt equally nervous about being in new cultural situations but who learned how to manage their nervousness.</p>		

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## Worksheet for preparing for a cross-cultural business trip

<i>Worksheet for Preparing for a Cross-Cultural Business Trip</i>	
<p>Use this worksheet to document your learning about another country you'll be visiting to conduct business. By documenting what you know about that country's culture, you can be better prepared to interact with your counterparts during the trip.</p>	
<b>Part I: Trip Specifics</b>	
Date of trip:	
Country to be visited:	
Purpose of visit:	
Individual(s) I will meet with:	
Cultural information sources to consult:	
<b>Part II: Document Your Findings</b>	
<p>In the sections below, document what you learn about how people in the country you'll be visiting handle the following activities:</p>	
Greeting new business associates	Making decisions
Negotiating	Handling conflicts

Establishing deadlines	Disclosing personal information
Interacting with authority figures	Using nonverbal signals
Acquiring knowledge	Entertaining business associates
Displaying status	Delivering presentations
Setting business priorities and goals	Selling and marketing to customers
Defining agreement on a business deal	Giving gifts
Discussing workplace accomplishments	Other

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## Why Develop Others?

“At the end of the day, you bet on people, not strategies.”

Larry Bossidy

Former CEO, AlliedSignal

In today’s global business environment, markets and regulations change quickly. Competitors constantly innovate. Technological changes are the norm.

In order to outmaneuver the competition and meet the demands of the moment, organizations must be agile. They must execute flawlessly. And they must transform themselves continuously.

Are your leaders ready?

Dr. Noel M. Tichy

Professor

University of Michigan Ross School of Business

We have now entered an era where I don't care what industry you're in, you need leaders who can make decisions, make judgment calls at every single level. All the way down to the interface with the customer.

If you go to a company like Google or any of the high tech companies, a lot of the innovation that Amazon does is happening right at the front line. Go ahead, try it, put it out there, we'll learn from it. That cannot happen if the senior leadership doesn't have a commitment to both develop the leadership capability, but develop the business through engaging people at all levels of the organization.

### Becoming a teaching organization

I like to tell parents that they cannot delegate their responsibility to develop their children. And I think it is the same in an organization. Day in and day out the person that has the biggest impact on people in the organization is the next level above and the associates around and below. And so to build a learning organization I say is not enough. Learning could be, you know we are learning cooking, we are learning this or that, but teaching organizations, when I learned something, I have a responsibility to teach my colleagues.

So everybody takes responsibility for generating new knowledge and it is not enough to be a learner, you then have to translate it into teaching.

### The Virtuous Teaching Cycle

The role of a leader is to ensure that the people who work for them and around them are better every day. There's only one way to make people better. It's to teach them, learn from them, create what I call "virtuous teaching cycles", not command and control.

A virtuous teaching cycle is teach learn, teach learn. And the leader has a responsibility for reducing the hierarchy, for having a point of view to start the discussion, but then to be responsible to hear everyone's voice, get everyone involved in a disciplined way. It is not a free for all. But it is the leader's responsibility to create that virtuous teaching cycle.

A wonderful example of virtuous teaching cycle is the program that Roger Enrico ran at Pepsi, where every one of the 10 vice presidents comes with a business project.

Roger Enrico gets smarter as result of five days with 10 vice presidents, because he's learning from them. He needs to lower the hierarchy. He needs to be open to learning. And in turn, the people participating need to be energized and empowered to come up and engage in problem solving.

Another example is at Best Buy, where every morning in the stores you would bring 20 associates or so together and they would review the profit and loss statement from the day before, what we learned from the different customer segments in our stores, what we can do to improve our performance this day. And they do that every single day. The store manager was learning mostly from the associates on the floor.

That was a virtuous teaching cycle where everybody is teaching everybody, everybody is learning and the result has been an incredible result at Best Buy.

"The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership."

- Harvey S. Firestone

Founder, Firestone Tire and Rubber Co

There are clear advantages to leader-led development.

But for many leaders, taking on teaching, coaching, and other development responsibilities can seem daunting. You might avoid taking on these roles due to lack of time, resources, or your own lack of comfort with this role.

The following tips and resources can help you impart valuable learning to your team every day.

To develop others...

- Start with a Teachable Point of View

The first requirement of being able to develop other leaders is to have what I call a teachable point of view. I often give the example of, if I ran a tennis camp and you just came to day one of the tennis camp, I better have a teachable point of view on how I teach tennis. So you are standing there looking at me and it has got four elements. One, the ideas, well how do I teach the backhand, the forehand, the serve, rules of tennis. Then if I am a good tennis coach, I have a set of values. What are the right behaviors I want, how do I want you to dress, how do I want you to behave on the tennis court.

But if that's all I have, what do I do? Show you a power point presentation and then expect you to hit 500 backhands, 500 serves, run around for eight hours. I have to have a teachable point of view on emotional energy. How do I motivate you to buy in to the ideas and values?

On one end of the spectrum it could be I threaten you with corporal punishment, the other I can give you stock options, I can make you feel good about yourself, I can help you develop as a human being, what motivates you.

And then finally, how do I make the tough judgment calls, the yes/no, decisions as the tennis coach, the ball is in, the ball is out. I don't hire consultants and set up a committee, it is yes/no. And the same with running a business, what are the products, services, distribution channels, customer segments that are going to grow top line growth and profitability of the organization.

What are the values that I want everyone in the organization to have, how do I emotionally energize thousands of people, and then how do I make the yes/no, judgments on people and on business issues. So the fundamental building block of being able to develop other leaders is to have that teachable point of view just like the tennis coach.

To develop others...

- Lead with questions

Questions are hugely important because you want to create dialogue and again, what I call a virtuous teaching cycle where the teacher learns from the students and vice versa. Which means everybody ought to be free to ask whatever is on their mind, whatever it will take to get clarity and understanding, but it is not the leader just coming in and freeform asking questions. I believe the leader has a responsibility for framing the discussion, for having as best they can a teachable point of view, they may need help from their people in flushing it out, but they need to set the stage but then it has to be a very interactive, what I call virtuous teaching cycle environment, teach learn, teach learn, teach learn.

To develop others...

- Make it part of your routine

A good example to me of an outstanding leader developing other leaders is Myrtle Potter who at the time I am commenting was Chief Operating Officer of Genentech running the commercial side

of the business. And she would take time at the end of every single meeting and do some coaching of the whole team on how we could perform as a team better, and then she would often take individuals and say, could we spend 10 minutes over a cup of coffee, I want to give you some feedback and coaching on that report that you just presented on or how you are handling a particularly difficult human resource issue, but it was part of her regular routine. And I think the challenge for all of us as leaders is to make that a way of life and it is built into the fabric of how we lead and it is not a one off event, three times a year. It is happening almost every day.

To develop others...

- Make it a priority

One of the biggest challenges in getting people kind of on this path is to overcome some of their own resistance, either fear or the way I view the world I don't have time for this, everybody can make time. Roger Enrico is CEO of Pepsi. He didn't have time to go off for a week at a time and run training sessions. He had to readjust his calendar. So it requires you to look in the mirror and say, is this important. If it is important, of course I can make the time. Then I have to get over my own anxiety on how well I can do it, but it is a commitment to get on the path that says: this is how I am going to drive my own performance and the performance of my colleagues.

To develop others...

- Learn to teach

I think the biggest mistake is to assume you are going to be good at it right off the bat. It is like learning anything else. First time you go out and try and play tennis, good luck. But you got to stay with it and you got to engage your people in helping make you better and them better. And so it is a journey you need to get on, not I am going to do it perfectly when I start out.

If you want to be a great leader who is a great teacher, it's very simple. You have got to dive into the deep end of the pool. But you've got to dive into the pool with preparation. I don't want you drowning. I want you succeeding. It is extraordinarily rewarding for most human beings to teach others. I think once you can turn that switch on, it is self perpetuating. You get a lot of reinforcement, your team is better. You perform better because your performance goes up and it becomes this virtuous teaching cycle.

Your opportunity to develop others

We've heard why developing others can drive greater business results, and how to make the most of your leader-led development efforts. The materials provided in Develop Others enable you to create personalized learning experiences for YOUR team within the flow of their daily activities. Use the guides and projects to engage your team quickly. And to explore how key concepts apply to them in the context of their priorities and goals.

The value of teaching is the performance of the organization is totally dependent on making your people smarter and more aligned every day as the world changes. In the 21st century we are not going to get by with command and control. We are going to have to get by with knowledge creation. The way you create knowledge in an organization is you create these virtuous teaching cycles where you are teaching and learning simultaneously, responding to customer demands and changes, responding to changes in the global environment. My bottom line is if you're not teaching, you're not leading.



A leader's most important role in any organization is making good judgments — well informed, wise decisions about people, strategy and crises that produce the desired outcomes. When a leader shows consistently good judgment, little else matters. When he or she shows poor judgment nothing else matters. In addition to making their own good judgment calls, good leaders develop good judgment among their team members.

**Dr. Noel M. Tichy****Professor, University of Michigan Ross School of Business**

Dr. Noel M. Tichy is Professor of Management and Organizations, and Director of the Global Business Partnership at the University of Michigan Ross School of Business. The Global Business Partnership links companies and students around the world to develop and engage business leaders to incorporate global citizenship activities, both environmental projects and human capital development, for those at the bottom of the pyramid. Previously, Noel was head of General Electric's Leadership Center at Crotonville, where he led the transformation to action learning at GE. Between 1985 and 1987, he was Manager of Management Education for GE where he directed its worldwide development efforts at Crotonville. He currently consults widely in both the private and public sectors. He is a senior partner in Action Learning Associates. Noel is author of numerous books and articles, including:

For more information about Noel Tichy, visit <http://www.noeltichy.com>.

## Share an Idea

Leaders are in a unique position to recognize the ideas and tools that are most relevant and useful for their teams. If you only have a few minutes, consider sharing an idea or tool from this topic with your team or peers that is relevant and timely to their situation.

For example, consider sending one of the three recommended ideas or tools below to your team with your comments or questions on how the idea or tool can be of value to your organization. By simply sharing the item, you can easily engage others in important conversations and activities relevant to your goals and priorities.

[Why a diverse workforce?](#)

[Steps for creating a diversity recruitment plan](#)

[Creating an inclusive environment self-assessment](#)

To share an idea, tip, step, or tool with your comments via e-mail, select the EMAIL link in the upper right corner of the page that contains the idea, tip, step, or tool that you wish to share.

## Discussion 1: Strengthening our diversity approach

The more diverse your team is, the more your unit and organization benefit — in better talent recruitment and retention, employee commitment and productivity, and profitable innovation.

But to gain these benefits, your team must take the right *approach* to diversity. Current approaches have serious limitations. "Assimilation" (downplaying differences between people) deprives companies of diverse employees' unique perspectives. "Differentiation" (pigeonholing diverse employees in niche jobs based solely on their ethnicity, gender, or some other distinguishing characteristic) can make people feel exploited and excluded from the company's mainstream opportunities.

If your team is using assimilation or differentiation, it needs to move toward a better approach: “inclusion” — using employees’ differences to improve the way work gets done, promoting equal opportunity, and valuing differences as much as similarities.

Use these resources to lead a discussion with your team about how to determine which diversity approach the team is currently using and (if necessary) to generate ideas for adopting the inclusion approach.

Download resources:

[Discussion Invitation: Strengthening Our Diversity Approach](#)

[Discussion Guide: Strengthening Our Diversity Approach](#)

[Discussion Slides: Strengthening Our Diversity Approach \(optional\)](#)

[Tips for Preparing for and Leading the Discussion](#)

Working through the discussion guide can take up to 45 minutes. If you prefer a shorter 15- or 30-minute session, you may want to focus only on those concepts and activities most relevant to your situation.

## Discussion 2: Retaining diverse employees

To gain all the benefits that diversity offers (such as more innovation, greater employee loyalty, and higher productivity), your team needs to not only recruit diverse employees but also retain them. And retention can be challenging — especially if the diverse employees you've recruited don't feel welcome, appreciated, and supported.

To retain the diverse members of your team, it's good for your team to periodically assess patterns in turnover among diverse groups of employees and consider how turnover may be preventing your team from achieving its goals. Your team can then identify and implement strategies for retaining diverse employees.

Use these resources to lead a discussion with your team about how to identify and address problems with retaining diverse employees.

Download resources:

[Discussion Invitation: Retaining Diverse Employees](#)

[Discussion Guide: Retaining Diverse Employees](#)

[Discussion Slides: Retaining Diverse Employees \(optional\)](#)

[Tips for Preparing for and Leading the Discussion](#)

Working through the discussion guide can take up to 45 minutes. If you prefer a shorter 15- or 30-minute session, you may want to focus only on those concepts and activities most relevant to your situation.

## Start a Group Project

Just like any change effort, successfully incorporating new skills and behaviors into one's daily activities and habits takes time and effort. After reviewing or discussing the concepts in this topic, your direct reports will still need your support to fully apply new concepts and skills. They will need to overcome a variety of barriers including a lack of time, lack of confidence, and a fear of making

mistakes. They will also need opportunities to hone their skills and break old habits. To help ensure their success, you can provide safe opportunities for individuals and your team as a whole to practice and experiment with new skills and behaviors on the job.

For example, to encourage the adoption of new norms, you can provide your team members with coaching, feedback and additional time to complete tasks that require the use of new skills. Management approaches such as these will encourage team members to experiment with new skills until they become proficient.

Group learning projects provide another valuable technique for accelerating team members' development of new behaviors. A group learning project is an on-the-job activity aimed at providing team members with direct experience implementing their new knowledge and skills. Through a learning project, team members discover how new concepts work in the context of their situation, while simultaneously having a direct and tangible impact on the organization.

The documents below provide steps, tips, and a template for initiating a group learning project with your team, along with two project recommendations for this topic.

Download resources:

[Tips for Initiating and Supporting a Learning Project](#)

[Learning Project Plan Template](#)

[Learning Project: Develop a More Inclusive Environment](#)

[Learning Project: Define a Diversity Recruitment Strategy](#)

## Making Diversity a Business Advantage

Andrew Park. "Making Diversity a Business Advantage." *Harvard Management Update*, April 2008.

[Download file](#)

### Summary

In today's global marketplace, the smartest organizations recognize that workforce diversity can be a source of competitive strength. In this article, thought leaders and executives suggest four practices that will help you increase diversity in your ranks and leverage it to spot new market opportunities and make the most of them. Learn how industry giants IBM and Merck harnessed their employees' diverse backgrounds and perspectives to gain a competitive edge.

## How Coca-Cola Built Strength on Diversity

Neville Isdell and Christina Bielaszka-DuVernay. "How Coca-Cola Built Strength on Diversity." *Harvard Management Update*, April 2008.

[Download file](#)

### Summary

Eight years ago, the Coca-Cola Company settled the largest racial-discrimination lawsuit in history. In the wake of the \$192.5 million settlement, the federal court appointed a seven-member task force to

oversee the company's diversity efforts. In this article, Coca-Cola CEO Neville Isdell discusses how, with the task force's guidance, his company worked to establish a culture that embraced diversity—with measurable programs and initiatives designed to recruit, mentor, and retain minorities and women. Today, Coca-Cola boasts double-digit leaps in the percentage of women and minorities holding management and executive positions. What's more, Isdell explains, Coca-Cola has leveraged the insights of its diverse workforce to reap business benefits.

## Fat Chance

Bronwyn Fryer, Julia Kirby, Howard Weyers, Sondra Solovay, Mark V. Roehling, and Amy Wilensky. "Fat Chance." *Harvard Business Review*, May 2005.

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### Summary

Sid Shawn is a 10-year veteran of NMO Financial Services and a mainstay of the pensions marketing group. He's been a good, consistent worker and an invaluable resource for the salespeople and consultant relations managers. Sid also weighs 400 pounds. So when he is the only internal candidate for the customer-facing position of consultant relations manager, sales and marketing VP Bill Houglan feels that he has a tough hiring decision to make. Sid knows the company's products backward and forward, but to succeed in the new job, he would have to impress the polished professionals at major benefits consultancies. What kind of image would Sid present in face-to-face sales situations? Could he keep up with the job's physical demands and fast pace? Does Sid's weight matter? Bill wonders. With obesity reaching epidemic proportions in the United States, companies are feeling its impact on their insurance costs and their employees' health. They are increasingly compelled to adopt policies concerning overweight workers.

Offering expert advice on this fictional case study Howard Weyers, CEO of Weyco, which has fired employees for smoking and is now targeting the issue of obesity at work; Sondra Solovay, a California attorney focusing on weight-related issues and the author of *Tipping the Scales of Justice: Fighting Weight-Based Discrimination*; Mark V. Roehling, a Michigan State University professor whose research has focused on issues of obesity in the workplace; and Amy Wilensky, author of *The Weight of It: A Story of Two Sisters*.